

# Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2018/19



Summary			
The role of the Regulations and Code of Practice is to maintain the quality and academic standards of the University's research degree programmes and to provide guidance for research students and staff.			
Scope - This document applies to:			
Applies to research students and to staff and examiners who are involved with research degree programmes.			
For applicants entering in:	n/a	Applies to academic year:	2018/19
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**REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR  
RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

**2018/19**

**Summary of regulatory changes and/or additions for 2018/19**

<b>Section no</b>		<b>Page/s</b>
4.3 and Annex 1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PhD and EngD periods of study</b></p> <p><i>All PhD and EngD periods of study have been aligned with a normal full-time maximum of four years. PhD and EngD students with longer periods of study registered before 24 September 2018 and those who register on existing doctoral training entities that allow longer periods are not included in the change.</i></p>	12, 52, 57
4.4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Attendance requirement</b></p> <p><i>New regulation specifies the attendance requirement for research students.</i></p>	13-14
6.2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Annual progress reviews</b></p> <p><i>A new requirement that any substantial written reports submitted as part of an annual progress review must also be submitted for text comparison checking has been added.</i></p>	27-28
9.2.1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proofreading and the dissertation</b></p> <p><i>New regulation has been added to provide clarity on the acceptable use of third-party proofreading of the dissertation.</i></p>	36
9.2.5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Deferred access to the dissertation</b></p> <p><i>The deferral process has been revised so that, in exceptional cases, an indefinite deferral may be granted. Clarification on where the decision on the deferral rests has also been included.</i></p>	38
9.5.3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Deadline for errors of substance</b></p> <p><i>Revised regulation permits the examiners to allow up to four additional weeks for the candidate to make further, minor corrections where the candidate has submitted within the standard six months but where the examiners are still not satisfied with the corrections made.</i></p>	48
9.6.2 and Annex 4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Submission of the definitive dissertation or published work</b></p> <p><i>Revised regulation has introduced electronic deposit for the definitive version of research degree dissertations. This replaces the requirement for a hardbound version.</i></p>	50, 77-78
Annex 8	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>RDEB and plagiarism cases</b></p> <p><i>The plagiarism process has been revised to allow the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) to consider all plagiarism cases on academic grounds, with only the most severe cases also going on to be considered through the Student Disciplinary Regulations. Revisions have also been made to address where plagiarism is suspected after the oral examination or after the award.</i></p>	84-88
Annex 12	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave</b></p> <p><i>The revised policy sets out how suspensions and, for research students who receive a maintenance stipend from the University or from a UK Research Council, continued payments operate for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. The previous version of the policy, which has been superseded, sat outside of the Regulations and Code.</i></p>	104-108
Annex 13	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medical absence policy for funded research students</b></p> <p><i>The new policy relates to the payment of stipends during periods of medical absence for research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University and/or by a UK Research Council.</i></p>	109-110

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<b>Responsibility for review</b>	Codes Executive Group, Academic Quality and Policy Office

REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES  
2018-19

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***These Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (hereafter “the Regulations and Code”) apply to the degrees listed below.***

They do **not** apply to Higher Doctorates (DEng, DLitt, DMus, DSc, LLD) which have separate regulations and can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/>

<b>Doctorates</b>	<b>in the Faculty/Faculties of</b>
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	All faculties
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Musical Composition	Arts
Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)	Health Sciences
Doctor of Education (EdD)	Social Sciences and Law
Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)	Social Sciences and Law
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	Health Sciences Life Sciences
Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)	Social Sciences and Law
Engineering Doctorate (EngD)	Engineering
<b>Masters degrees (by research)</b>	<b>in the Faculty/Faculties of</b>
Master of Music (MMus)	Arts
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	Arts Social Sciences and Law
Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Musical Composition	Arts
Master of Science by Research (MScR)	Engineering Health Sciences Life Sciences Science

The Regulations are for use by:

- supervisors of research students
- research students
- examiners of research degrees
- all University staff responsible for postgraduate research programmes and students

Heads of School, faculty Graduate Education Directors, faculty Research Directors and faculty administrators receive a copy of the Regulations and Code. All other staff, including supervisors, and research students are encouraged to access the Regulations and Code at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html>.

***The Regulations and Code are updated annually so it is essential that research students and staff refer to the current edition. Only the current edition has regulatory status and supersedes all previous editions.***

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Regulations and Code

The Regulations set out the University's requirements for:

- the management of research degree programmes;
- the mechanisms for assuring the academic standards of research degrees;
- the support (academic and pastoral) that should be provided for research students and the ways in which such support is offered.

The role of the Regulations is to maintain the quality and academic standards of the University's research degree programmes and to provide clear guidance for research students and staff in schools.

As well as setting out the University's minimum requirements for postgraduate research degree programmes, the Regulations and Code aim to provide helpful background information for staff and research students, including details of internal policies and practice. The Regulations and Code are consistent with the University's policies and strategies and with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) current requirements, including the Quality Code (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>).

**The sections of the Regulations and Code outlined in boxes throughout the text are University Regulations. They set out the University's minimum requirements/responsibilities for postgraduate research programmes and must be followed.**

The detailed regulations for the individual research degree programmes (listed on page 1) to which the Regulations and Code apply are in **Annex 1** (doctoral degrees) and **Annex 2** (Masters Degrees by Research) for ease of reference.



## 2 Institutional arrangements

### 2.1 Governance Framework

#### 2.1.1 The Governance structure

##### *Senate*

Senate has responsibility for governance and for the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*. Information on Senate is held at:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/universitycommittees/senate/>.

##### *University Education Committee*

The University Education Committee, which is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), has an overarching quality assurance role for educational matters. It has delegated authority from Senate to approve revisions to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*. Details about Education Committee's Terms of Reference and membership can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/edcmtt.html>.

##### *University Academic Quality and Standards Committee*

The University Academic Quality and Standards Committee is responsible for overseeing the quality and standards of learning, teaching and assessment at the University. It oversees the development and maintenance of regulations, policies and codes of practice as they relate to the University's Quality Framework. The terms of reference are at:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/uaqsc/>.

##### *Codes Executive Group*

The Codes Executive Group is responsible for undertaking the annual review of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*. The terms of reference are at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/ceg/>.

##### *University Graduate Studies Committee*

The University Graduate Studies Committee (UGSC) is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) and is responsible for developing and maintaining the strategic framework for postgraduate education across the University. The terms of reference are at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/graddeans/>.

##### *Research Degrees Examination Board*

The University's Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) makes the decisions about the award of all research degrees. RDEB is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies). More details are available at

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/research-exam-board/>.

##### *Faculty Graduate Studies Committees*

Graduate Education Directors chair their respective faculty Graduate Studies Committee, where all matters relating to research students are discussed.

### 2.1.2 Governance roles

#### *Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies)*

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) has oversight of postgraduate education across the University and reports to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

#### *Graduate Education Director*

Each faculty has a Graduate Education Director whose primary responsibility is to support the Dean of their faculty in managing postgraduate education and research degree programmes.

### 2.1.3 Other University-level groups

#### *Bristol Doctoral College*

The Bristol Doctoral College (BDC) – <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/> – facilitates cross-University learning and training activities for all research students. It delivers the University-wide Personal and Professional Development programme, supported by Skills Training and Reviews (STaR), which is an online tool that maintains a track record of communications between students and supervisors, of skills training plans and of regular Progress Monitoring.

The BDC serves as a hub for information, guidance and communications for research students, including in relation to external collaborators, potential sponsors, funders and future employers. It also works on marketing and recruitment, promoting and showcasing success stories and opportunities for research students in Bristol.

The BDC is led by a Director and governed by the BDC Board.

## **2.2 Academic standards**

The Regulations and Code align with the current QAA Quality Code for Higher Education for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>). The University's research degrees accord with the current QAA Qualification Characteristics for Doctoral and Masters Degrees and are mapped against national benchmarking standards.

UK research degrees are in alignment with the European-wide guidance, as shown in the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (see [http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/Bergen\\_conf/Reports/EQFreport.pdf](http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/Bergen_conf/Reports/EQFreport.pdf)). University of Bristol research degrees are therefore recognised as having Europe-wide equivalence.

The University has several mechanisms for assuring itself that the academic standards of the research degrees it awards are at an appropriate level. The following paragraphs describe the measures that contribute to setting and maintaining these standards.

#### *Quality of students and academic staff*

The University takes care to recruit students who meet the entrance criteria for its research programmes (see Section 4).

The University recruits academic staff who can fulfil its requirements for conducting research and contributing to education. Specifications for appointments and promotion/progression can be found on the University website: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/grading/academic/>

Criteria against which candidates for staff appointments and promotion are measured include research success or potential and the ability to teach and inspire students at all levels.

#### *Quality of supervision*

The University provides guidance on supervision of research students as part of its *CREATE CPD scheme* for new academic staff, and mentoring arranged at school level. Development sessions will also be offered for experienced staff wanting to refresh their practice as part of the broader Academic Staff Development programme.

#### *Annual progress review*

All research students and supervisors are required to engage in the annual progress review process (see Section 6). One of the main purposes of the annual progress review is to assure the student, the supervisors and the relevant school and faculty that academic progress is satisfactory.

Each Graduate Education Director is responsible for monitoring all annual progress review reports in their faculty.

#### *External examining*

When approving the appointment of examiners for research degrees, Heads of School (or nominees) and Graduate Education Directors are required to confirm that the potential examiners have the appropriate knowledge and experience to carry out the assessment effectively. The criteria for selection of research degree examiners are described in Section 9.3.

#### *External benchmarks of research quality*

These are covered in Section 3: the research environment.

### **2.3 Maintaining and improving the quality of research degree programmes**

The University ensures that it continues to meet UK quality standards for research degrees and accords with national guidelines.

In addition, RDEB fulfils the role of assuring consistency of academic standards across all faculties, scrutinising all research degree examiners' reports and taking account of their comments concerning the process and operation of research degree assessment.

#### *Research students' views*

The University regularly gathers feedback from research students about their experience at Bristol, and uses the results to inform the development of its provision.

#### *Liaison with the University of Bristol Students' Union*

The postgraduate education officer provides a student voice as a member of the University Graduate Studies Committee and other relevant committees and groups. Other officers, student representatives and staff employed by the University of Bristol Students' Union are also engaged in dialogue on postgraduate matters as appropriate.

## 2.4 Regulations for research degrees

The University's regulations for research degrees (**Annexes 1 and 2**) cover:

- the duration of the period of study (full time and part-time equivalent);
- the modes of study permitted;
- how a candidate can achieve the award;
- what the nature and size of the dissertation or equivalent should be; and
- the nature of the assessment and any generic assessment criteria that are applicable.

All research students and their supervisors must be aware of the requirements of these Regulations and Code and of the regulations that govern the award for which the student is registered.

## 2.5 Monitoring of research degree programmes against indicators and targets

The University uses the following indicators for monitoring research degree programmes:

### *Submission and qualification<sup>1</sup> rates for postgraduate research degrees*

Qualification rates data are considered by the University at various levels. Graduate Education Directors work with individual schools if a need for improvement is identified.

### *Annual monitoring statistics*

Annual monitoring statistics are scrutinised by schools as part of the Education Action Plan (EAP) process.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'qualification rate' (also known as 'completion rate') refers to the length of time it takes from the date of registration on a research degree programme for a student to be awarded the qualification by the University Research Degrees Examination Board.

### **3 The research environment**

The University provides a high-quality research environment, as shown by its consistent excellent performance in successive external research audits. The University's Strategy (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/strategy/>) aims to maintain and improve on this long-standing success through a variety of actions.

The research environments in the faculties are designed to support the needs of the cognate disciplines within each faculty. The way in which research in different subjects in a faculty is conducted therefore influences the organisation of research activities, the support for research students and the management of research degree programmes.

The University is part of many cross-institutional research collaborations and research students are encouraged, where appropriate, to contribute to collaborative research in order to develop the skills required for involvement in research of international excellence.

There is a range of externally funded initiatives that provide doctoral training in the postgraduate research environment. These initiatives are often cross-institutional in nature and may contain research degree programmes that combine a structured taught component with the research project. There are a number of different models, which are grouped under the general term 'doctoral training entities', including:

- A Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) provides training for cohorts of research students within focused research areas, often defined strategically by the UK Research Council funder(s), and concentrated on academic- and/or industrially-relevant research topics.
- A Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) provides training for cohorts of research students across a broad range of subjects as determined by the research institution(s).
- A Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) provides training for cohorts of research students.
- An Industrial Doctoral Centre (IDC) provides training for cohorts of research students and incorporates a strong industrial focus.

In addition, Innovative Training Network (ITN) is an umbrella term for a group of European Council funded collaborative programmes, based on a multi-organisational and international model of training that facilitates mobility of PhD researchers who are classified as Early Stage Researchers (ESRs). ESRs are registered as both PhD students and employees of their home university. These programmes often offer dual/joint awards.

***The University's expectations of the ways in which schools provide an appropriate research environment for research students to learn about and carry out research are:***

- 3.1 Schools and faculties must ensure that the student can interact with sufficient research-active staff in the student's area of research within the school, the faculty, the University, or elsewhere.
- 3.2 Students working remotely from their school, including those 'writing up', must have access to appropriate facilities to support their work, including those available electronically.
- 3.3 All students are entitled to opportunities to experience and contribute to research activities, at school and faculty level, as appropriate. Schools and faculties must have strategies in place to enable students to make the most of these opportunities, for example, by presenting their research at school seminars.
- 3.4 Where the student's project requires research facilities or expertise beyond those that are available within the school, faculty or University, the school must ensure that the student has adequate access elsewhere.

## 4 Admission and induction of students

### 4.1 Admissions

The University has a set of admissions principles and procedures that should be considered and followed by those involved with research degree programme admissions.

#### 4.1.1 Admission requirements

General admission requirements for entry to research degree programmes are contained in the Postgraduate Prospectus, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/prospectus/postgraduate/>. Each programme or group of programmes will provide a detailed admissions statement that details entry requirements and any local admissions procedures. Admissions statements are accessible via the online prospectus pages. Doctoral training entities may have specific entry criteria and these should be outlined within the online information available.

There are specific admission requirements for distance learning research students as set out in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 9.

Some programmes or specific doctoral projects with external sponsorship may need to include clarification on intellectual property rights, in line with the University's *Intellectual Property Policy for Students* (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/student-intellectual-property-policy.pdf>).

**The following are the University's minimum requirements for entry to research degree programmes:**

- a first degree, normally at a level equivalent to at least UK Honours 2.1 level; **or**
- a relevant postgraduate Masters qualification; **or**
- evidence of prior learning or achievement that enables the University to assess the candidate's potential to succeed in the programme applied for.

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to satisfy the University's Language Entry Requirements, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/>.

Faculties and schools should facilitate and encourage students to attend language courses, as appropriate, either before their programme begins or during the programme if required by the school/faculty.

#### 4.1.2 Admission procedures

The University Student Recruitment Committee has overall responsibility for postgraduate admissions. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International and Student Recruitment) and is responsible for:

- the annual review of the admissions principles and procedures that apply to research degree programmes, and
- assuring itself that faculty/school admissions practices are aligned with University policy.

**Graduate Education Directors** oversee postgraduate admissions within their faculties, approving any offers made outside normal entry requirements.

**Heads of School** are normally responsible for the integrity of the admissions processes in their school. It is therefore the Head of School's responsibility to appoint school admissions selectors, and to ensure that these selectors are given time to undergo training in admissions and have sufficient resources for them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

**Interviews:** If interviews take place, the training in recruitment and selection detailed in the University's Resourcing guidance (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/resourcing/>) may be beneficial.

*The University's core requirements in respect of decisions made about formal applications for admission to research degree programmes are:*

Decisions on admissions to research programmes must be taken by two or more members of academic staff. Selectors must ensure that all admissions decisions take account of the University's statutory responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities and any related University policies, and must be based on fair and justifiable criteria. Selectors should encourage applicants to disclose disabilities in order that appropriate support may be put in place.

In the case of entrants seeking to use accreditation of prior learning or achievement to meet the entry requirement for admission to a research degree programme, criteria must be in place to enable a prospective research student's preparedness and potential to complete the programme to be evaluated. Those involved in decision-making will provide evidence that the criteria have been applied to the relevant faculty office.

The reasons for the decision made must be recorded in a brief file note.

Interview panels should normally include the applicant's expected supervisors although for some doctoral training entities this may not be possible if supervisors are not known at this point.

For some doctoral training entities, the admissions process may need to accommodate multiple institutions. In such cases, it is important that the core principles of the University's admissions policy are incorporated.

#### *4.1.3 Pre-entry advice for disabled students*

All applicants are considered using equitable academic criteria. Prospective students who have a disability are encouraged to make early contact with Disability Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>) to discuss what support may be offered by the University, and how it may be funded, so that they can make an informed choice about any offer of a place.

#### *4.1.4 Pre-entry advice for faculties/schools where an applicant has a disability*

Advice is available from Disability Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>) to staff on how the faculty/school can support disabled students. Applicants should be encouraged to declare any disability at the earliest opportunity and staff should support this and signpost such students to Disability Services. To promote early contact, offer letters to successful applicants also provide appropriate signposting to Disability Services. In addition, there are School Disability Coordinators (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/study-support/sdc/>) who have oversight of the support for disabled students within each school.



## 4.2 Registration

The required period of study is laid down in the regulations for each degree. Students must register with the University when they begin their studies and at the start of each academic year. Continued registration is subject to satisfactory progress.

No student registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may concurrently be registered on a programme of full-time or part-time study leading to an award of a qualification at this or another institution, unless this is a requirement of their programme of study (normally only applies to students on professional programmes and to joint or dual awards).

Unless otherwise specified as part of a partnership agreement, the provisions of these Regulations and Code apply to all University of Bristol-registered research students during periods of study at another organisation.

For collaborative PhD programmes, students registered at the University of Bristol may be subject to the regulations of a partner organisation for some or all of any taught component. This will be specified in the partnership agreement.

For joint or dual awards, there may be a combination of examination procedures that cover the University of Bristol regulations and those of another institution so that both Section 9 of the Regulations and Code and the requirements of the other institution (such as, for example, to cover a public defence) are met. This will be specified in the partnership agreement.

Doctoral students transferring to the University must complete a minimum of one year study full-time (or part-time equivalent) in order to be eligible for a doctoral award. This does not include the writing-up period.

Schools wishing to accept a doctoral student from elsewhere who is part way through their studies must be satisfied that the student has worked at an equivalent level to a Bristol doctoral student at a comparable stage.

In some faculties, students aiming for a doctoral degree are in the first instance registered for a Masters degree by research and are eligible for transfer to registration for the PhD degree, subject to satisfying the requirements set by the faculty and/or school. The transfer process normally occurs after one year and is subject to satisfactory progress.

In some cases, students on specific doctoral training programmes (usually of a 1+3 design) may be required initially to satisfy the requirements of a specific taught Masters award and will then be eligible to progress on to a doctorate. Such students are covered by the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for their taught Masters and may also be governed by specific programme rules.

### 4.3 Period of study

#### 4.3.1 The minimum and maximum periods of study

The minimum and maximum periods of study permitted for the University's research degree programmes are summarised in table 4.3.1.

The period of study begins when the student first registers for the degree programme. Where a student initially registers for a Masters degree by research and later transfers to a doctoral degree, the period of study begins on the date of registration for the Masters degree. Where a student transfers from a doctoral degree to a Masters degree by research, the relevant Graduate Education Director will, based on the circumstances, approve an appropriate remaining period of study to allow the student time to submit a dissertation for a Masters degree by research.

Table 4.3.1 **Normal minimum and maximum periods of study**

<b>Doctorates</b>	<b>F/T Minimum</b>	<b>F/T Maximum</b>	<b>P/T Maximum</b>
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Musical Composition	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)	3 yrs	3 yrs	6 yrs
Doctor of Education (EdD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	2 yrs	5 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Engineering Doctorate (EngD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
<b>Masters degrees (by research)</b>	<b>F/T Minimum</b>	<b>F/T Maximum</b>	<b>P/T Maximum</b>
Master of Music (MMus)	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs
Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Arts	1 yr	1 yr	2 yrs
Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Social Sciences and Law	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs
Master of Science by Research (MScR)	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs

The normal minimum and maximum periods of study for research students registered part time **assume students are studying on a half time basis**. If this is not the case, then the period of study should be adjusted accordingly on a pro-rata basis.

Periods of study may be varied for named programmes as specified in the individual programme regulations in **Annex 1** and **Annex 2**. Information on changes to the period of study relevant to full-time EngD students and to some full-time PhD students who are funded by an official sponsor is included in Annex 1.

All research students must submit their dissertation within their maximum period of study, which will take account of any approved extensions and exclude any approved suspensions (see Section 6.4). Where a research student does not submit within the

prescribed maximum period of study, the relevant Graduate Education Director may deem the student to have withdrawn due to lapse of time.

The overall maximum completion period (see Section 4.3.2) sets an absolute limit on the time allowed for the award of a research degree and does not relate to submission.

Sponsored research students may also be subject to their sponsors' requirements in respect of submission.

The period allowed for writing up for a research degree is one year for both full-time and part-time students.

#### 4.3.2 *The overall maximum completion period*

The University imposes an **overall maximum completion period** to ensure that research students do not take an excessive amount of time to complete their degrees. The maximum completion period, set out below, refers to the total time limits for doctoral awards and masters by research awards and *includes* any suspensions or extensions that might have been granted (see Section 6.4). The submission of the dissertation should however be within the maximum period of study as set out in Section 4.3.1.

The maximum completion period runs from initial registration to final approval of the award by the Research Degrees Examination Board.

The maximum completion period for any research degree programme is the maximum *period of study* plus five years.

#### 4.4 **Attendance requirement**

Research students must normally ensure that they are able to attend the University in person as reasonably required by their supervisors, as well as to participate in any relevant training or developmental opportunities and to contribute to wider research activities within their discipline. The attendance requirement for part-time students should take their circumstances into account and should be on a pro-rata basis. Students undertaking fieldwork, placements or research at an external facility, which has been agreed with their supervisors, may be away from the University for the duration of the activity.

The only exceptions to the attendance requirement are:

- Distance learning students have separate attendance requirements in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 9;
- Students studying for joint and dual PhDs<sup>2</sup> are normally required to be in attendance at the University for at least 30% of their programme. Students who are

<sup>2</sup> A **joint doctoral award** is one which leads to a single award for a research degree programme which is jointly offered by the partner institutions. The single award certificate will be endorsed by all partners. A **dual doctoral award** is one which leads to separate awards from two partner institutions involved in a joint research degree programme. Each award certificate will refer to the joint programme.

studying as part of a collaborative partnership or doctoral training entity may spend more time away from the University if this is specified in the partnership agreement;

- Students who are writing up following the completion of their research phase; or
- Students with individual exceptional circumstances, where this has been supported by the supervisors and approved by the relevant Graduate Education Director. A transfer to distance learning may however be the most appropriate course of action if a student is unable to meet the standard attendance requirement.

The *Policy on Placements for Research Students* (Annex 11) should be followed when placements are being developed.

#### 4.5 Induction

Prospective research students will receive information about the induction procedures for their research degree programme when they are notified that their application has been successful, prior to their expected start date, so that they are aware of what to expect when they start their degree programme. Information for new students is also available in a specific area of the University's website: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/new/>.

The induction programme for new research students at the beginning of the academic year may be comprised of University-wide and/or faculty events, both of which are complemented by induction at school or programme level. The timing and content of induction activities should take account of the needs of different groups of research students, including those studying part-time or by distance learning, and international students arriving in the UK for the first time.

Faculties and schools normally ensure induction for those students who begin their research programme part way through the year is tailored to enable them to understand their faculty, school and programme of study.

##### 4.5.1. *The University's minimum requirements for induction of new research students are:*

All research students, including part-time students and those working remotely, must receive appropriate information about the environment in which they will be studying and pursuing research, including the names and contact details of all those involved in guiding and supporting them within their school or faculty and in the wider University.

All research students must receive appropriate induction that provides them with the information they will need to begin their programmes. Faculties and schools should determine what is covered at their respective levels.

Research students must receive detailed information about University regulations and policies that apply to their programme, including:

- supervision;
- progress monitoring and review;
- regulations that apply to the degree for which the student is registered;
- assessment criteria and regulations that apply to the degree for which the student is registered; and
- any institutional or faculty codes of practice that apply to the research degree programme.

Full information about supervisory arrangements is critical as these affect many aspects of the research degree programme. Research students should be made aware of the importance of their relationship with their supervisors and should understand their own role and that of their supervisors.

Induction programmes should also provide information for research students on:

- the learning infrastructure and how to access it, including arrangements for remote access, available equipment, library and computing facilities and any social space specially designated for research students;
- the University's expectations of the student's responsibilities;
- the day-to-day support and communication that students can access, including the school's arrangements for pastoral care,
- the opportunities available for the student to develop subject-specific and transferable skills;
- school and faculty arrangements for evaluating student satisfaction and dealing with problems encountered by students; and
- arrangements for meeting students' personal, social, welfare and recreational needs, including information about facilities, opportunities and support available within the University.

#### **4.6 Student entitlements and responsibilities**

Research students must be made aware of their entitlements and responsibilities, initially by the offer letter they receive from the University and subsequently at their initial meeting with their supervisors and/or at meetings with the school postgraduate support team (for example the PGR Director/Tutor, or equivalent, and relevant professional service staff).

*4.6.1 Research students studying at Bristol can expect the following entitlements and will be asked to accept the following responsibilities:*

##### **A student's entitlements**

- Adequate opportunities to meet their supervisors. As a guideline, it is normal for research students and their supervisors to review progress at least once a month (see Section 5.1.2).
- Before they start, details of the fees the University will charge for the programme and of any other expenditure necessitated by conducting research, e.g. bench fees.
- Information about special requirements in connection with their research project, e.g. the need to travel elsewhere to perform experimental work or use specialist libraries.
- Details of the length of time within which they must complete their programme of study/research.
- Information about arrangements for monitoring academic progress.
- Responses to queries they raise with their supervisor within a time scale agreed in advance.

- The return of written work, with appropriate and detailed feedback, within an agreed time scale.
- Access to a learning infrastructure that supports the progress of their studies and their ability to complete the degree successfully within the required time period.
- Access to an appropriate research environment, within the University or collaborating institutions, where relevant and sufficient expertise and appropriate facilities exist to support the student's research programme.
- Access to appropriate opportunities for developing research and transferable skills, including opportunities to practise for the oral examination.
- Where feasible, opportunities to participate in teaching, provided that it is not to the detriment of their research work, plus access to appropriate training and mentoring arrangements. Details of the University's *Policy for Postgraduate Research Students who Teach* are at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgsrwhoteach.html>.
- Information about support available at school, faculty and University level.
- Details of any relevant practical information, for example, accommodation and financial or travel information.
- Twenty-five days holiday a year, in addition to days when the University is closed.
- Where relevant, details of appropriate language courses.

#### **A student's responsibilities**

- To register with the University before beginning their studies and at the start of each academic session, and pay any relevant fees.
- To meet the attendance requirement set out in Section 4.4.
- To inform supervisors if away due to illness or other personal events.
- To take prime responsibility for the progress of their research and for the preparation and submission of their dissertation.
- To take prime responsibility for their personal and professional development. It is acknowledged that research students may require more guidance and support at the start of their studies, but there is an expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 10.
- To complete their research within the standard period of study. There is an expectation that full-time research students will work on their research project, including any work related to their studentship, for an average of at least 35 hours per week. Part-time students are expected to work on their projects for a length of time that is pro rata with the full-time expectation. Students' workloads will vary throughout the year as well as at different stages of their projects and this should be discussed with their supervisors. Students who for specific reasons, such as caring responsibilities, wish to work flexibly should discuss this with their supervisors in the first instance.

The University recognises that many research students may rely on paid employment to help fund their studies and/or gain valuable work experience. Achieving a sensible balance between work and study is essential. It is critical that research students take responsibility for ensuring that other activities do not adversely affect the progress of their studies.

All research students must ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, any restrictions on paid work that may be imposed by external sources, such as visa requirements or the funding source for their studies. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of these limitations and ensure they comply.

- To be aware that unsatisfactory progress due to external working may result in the initiation of the enhanced academic support process (Section 6.3), which may lead on to the procedure for unsatisfactory academic progress (Annex 3).
- To ensure that they understand the roles and responsibilities of their supervisory team and the support structures operating in their school and faculty.
- To treat all members of University staff and students with due respect and consideration.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with their supervisors and other University staff and students. Any concerns over this should be raised with the school's postgraduate team as soon as they occur.
- To keep in regular contact with their supervisors, particularly when away from the University.
- To comply with:
  - the University regulations governing their degree programme;
  - the University *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*;
  - the University's *Rules and Regulations for Students*;
  - the University's regulations and guidelines on research misconduct and plagiarism (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>);
  - relevant legal and ethical requirements, and University rules, including those covering health and safety, data protection, and confidentiality (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/practice-training/researchethicspolicy.pdf>);
  - the University's *Intellectual Property Policy for Students* (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>); and
  - the norms of good research practice applicable to their area of research and of the University's *Research Governance and Integrity Policy* (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/practice-training/rgi.pdf>).
- To meet the University's requirements for good academic conduct, including:
  - Making timely submissions of written work.
  - Ensuring that meeting with supervisors occur at regular intervals, as agreed between the student and supervisors, and that the student's contribution to these meetings is appropriate. The frequency of contact will vary between

disciplines and research progress. Any concern about the frequency of meetings should normally be raised with the supervisory team in the first instance and then the school postgraduate team if the concern is not resolved.

- Complying with the University's rules and with the requirements of any sponsoring or funding bodies concerning intellectual property.
  - Keeping appropriate records of their research, of their personal development and of formal meetings with supervisors, for example through the use of available online facilities such as Skills Training and Review (STaR): <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/star/>.
  - Making appropriate acknowledgement of the contribution made by the supervisor and any other person in any publication arising from the research work.
- To ensure that they have the necessary financial support to enable completion of the programme.
  - To keep their personal information up to date via the Studentinfo online link at <https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/>.

**International students** with student visa or immigration questions must only discuss these with staff in the **International Student Visa Advice and Compliance** team. These staff are specially trained to advise international students with any queries and are also responsible for providing general support and guidance to international students.

#### *4.6.2 Support available for students*

Information for students on the range of support at the University is available via the Current Students webpage (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/>). This acts as a first point of reference and provides a signpost to relevant services and resources. Further information for staff is available on the Student Services webpages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/student-services/>). Faculties and schools may provide additional support and this should be clearly signposted to students. Just Ask, a confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union, is also available to students (<http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support/>).



## 5 Supervision

### 5.1 The supervisory process

Supervisors have a fundamental role in supporting their research students throughout the period of the students' studies. The supervisory process will operate with some variance because of the nature of particular disciplines and related research environments. There are however a set of minimum requirements for supervisors that must be met across the University.

#### 5.1.1 *The minimum requirements for the supervision of all research students are:*

Each research student must have a main supervisor, who has primary responsibility for academic guidance and in whose school the student should normally be registered. In addition, the student must have a second point of academic contact and may have other supervisors as appropriate. All members of the supervisory team must have defined roles and responsibilities; students must be made aware of specific roles and responsibilities within the team.

If a student's research requires working elsewhere (e.g. as part of a collaborative project), the School should ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements, understood by the student, are in place to cover periods spent away from the University.

Information provided to research students that is of relevance to their supervisors' academic and pastoral responsibilities must be copied to the main supervisor.

#### 5.1.2 *The minimum requirements for input from, and interactions with, supervisors for all research students:*

##### *Identification of the main supervisor*

The normal expectation is that research students will be given the name and contact details of their main supervisor before arriving at the University. For doctoral training entities with an integrated taught component, a named academic will be appointed to provide appropriate support if a supervisor is not in place for the first year of study.

##### *Formal supervisory meetings*

Supervisors must take the initiative in making the first contact with their research students. The first meeting should normally take place within a week of a student's registration.

At the first meeting, it is usual to discuss the student's outline research plan, and any sponsorship or other financial arrangements, if these have not been agreed beforehand. It is also an opportunity to discuss any specific support or training needs the student may have and to direct them to appropriate sources of support.

After the first meeting, it becomes a shared responsibility between student and supervisors to maintain regular and adequate contact, irrespective of the student's location. Where a student has more than one supervisor, the supervisors should meet the student together to decide how they will divide responsibility for advice and to agree arrangements for future meetings.

The student and supervisors must agree the frequency, duration and format of their formal meetings, as well as the topics to be covered, and keep them under review thereafter.

The frequency of formal meetings will be determined by the nature and stage of the student's research. As a guideline, formal meetings to review progress should normally be scheduled for at least once a month. These meetings should take place either in person or through video or audio link. It may be necessary or appropriate to change the frequency of meetings depending on progress and performance.

The student and supervisors must develop a shared understanding of the purpose of meetings, especially those that are about formal review of the student's progress. A record of formal meetings must be kept, normally by the student.

Supervisors must also be reasonably accessible to their students outside of the formal meeting schedule to provide advice.

Supervisors share responsibility with the student to develop and maintain an effective working relationship.

#### *The supervisory process*

Supervisors must comment on their research student's written work, with feedback being given promptly so as not to impede the student's progress.

If a student is experiencing serious difficulty with the use of English, supervisors must discuss this with the student as early as possible, and it is recommended that the student should consult staff in the Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies for advice, if this is necessary.

Supervisors must ensure that students are made aware of the academic standards expected for the degree for which they are studying and of their responsibilities as set out in Section 4.6. This includes the submission of the student's research project within the maximum period of study.

As set out in Section 7, supervisors must regularly review training needs with the student, including in relation to personal and professional development.

Early in the programme, at their first meeting if possible, the student and supervisors must agree the nature and timing of any taught components of the student's programme, and discuss the implications of failure to complete them.

Supervisors must provide guidance to their students on how to access pastoral advice and other forms of support from within the school, faculty and University. Students must be informed in detail of the full support structure available to them. Information for students is also available on the Current Students webpage (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/>).

#### *Supervisors and the dissertation*

Supervisors should ensure that the student is aware of the University's Open Access policies and the copyright implications of publishing their dissertation in the institutional repository, providing advice and guidance on deferral procedures where needed (see Section 9.2.5 on deferrals).

Supervisors are responsible for offering guidance to their research students on the preparation of their dissertations, up to and including the final stages of drafting, and on

corrections required by the examiners. However, the ultimate responsibility for the content of the dissertation and the decision to submit the work rests with the student. Supervisors should make it clear that their comments are advisory.

Supervisors and students must agree a timetable for discussing the draft submission; students are then responsible for ensuring that drafts are submitted within sufficient time to enable the supervisor to comment. Supervisors in turn must provide written comments in good time so as not to jeopardise the timing of the formal submission of the dissertation.

Supervisors must provide guidance to their students to assist them in understanding the nature and substance of supervisor comments so that, if appropriate, the comments may be incorporated into the final version of the dissertation.

Responsibility for ensuring that proofreading is done to the required standard lies with the student. See Section 9.2.1 on proofreading and the dissertation for further information.

### *5.1.3 Guidance for supervisors on wider support and networking opportunities for their research students*

Supervisors are part of a wider support network for their research students, and supervisors should be aware of the other available sources of support. Supervisors play an important part in helping a student to make contact with alternative sources of support within the school and in the wider University; for example: student advisers, school staff with designated responsibilities for pastoral care of research students, career advisers and other sources of pastoral advice and support for current students (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/>). Just Ask, a confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union, is also available to students (<http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support>). See also the practical guide for supervisors in supporting their research students in Annex 14.

Supervisors should also help students to network with others working in their field of research, for example by attending relevant conferences and seeking sources of funding for such events, and submitting papers to conferences and journals. Supervisors should also help the student engage with other researchers by providing information of any relevant research being undertaken within the school or University.

## **5.2 Supervisors' knowledge, skills and responsibilities**

Given their wide-ranging and important responsibilities, supervisors must have the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide effective support for their research students. This includes an awareness of the needs of different types of students and the academic standards and requirements of different research programmes. Annex 14 provides a practical guide for supervisors in supporting their research students mainly in relation to non-academic matters but it also touches on some academic matters of a general nature.

Heads of School must ensure that the supervisors of research students have sufficient time to provide adequate support for each student. In determining overall workloads, Heads of School must take account of the range of responsibilities assigned to individual members of staff.

Experience of supervising taught Masters students during the dissertation stage of their degree can be a helpful background for a new supervisor of research students. Team

supervision can also help new supervisors to acquire the necessary skills and expertise for their role.

There are specific considerations in relation to the supervision of distance learning research students as set out in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 9.

#### 5.2.1 Responsibilities of Heads of School

It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to ensure that suitable supervisors are appointed, that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills, and that they have time to carry out their supervisory duties. Each supervisory team must satisfy the relevant Quality Assurance Agency requirements.

With regards to the suitability of supervisors, the Head of School (or nominee) shall consider whether there is an actual or potential conflict of interest before appointing main or co-supervisors. A 'conflict of interest' comprises a relationship between a supervisor and a student that would prevent or adversely affect the impartiality of the supervision, such as through personal, family or financial connections. Industrial or other professional supervisors (if involved) shall be included in these considerations.

#### 5.2.2 Appointment criteria for main supervisors

Individuals being nominated for appointment as the research student's main supervisor should:

1. Be a member of academic staff holding an open contract of employment at the University of at least 0.5 FTE<sup>3</sup>;
2. Expect to remain in a research-active position within the University for the expected duration of the student's studies and be able to provide the necessary guidance and support to their research students;
3. Be reasonably accessible;
4. Have an understanding of University, faculty and school policies and procedures concerning research students and supervisory responsibilities;
5. Have a minimum of three years' experience of research degree supervision and have experience of supervising at least one doctoral student through to successful completion.

Exceptionally, a school may appoint an individual who does not satisfy 4 and 5, provided an experienced co-supervisor is also appointed. The Graduate Education Director must approve the arrangement and the main supervisor must comply with any faculty-specific training requirements. In such cases, the experienced co-supervisor will act as mentor to the main supervisor and will also act as the first point of contact for the student for non-academic matters.

The Graduate Education Director must be satisfied that the supervisory team can provide an appropriate level of support and guidance to a candidate before confirming the appointment of the supervisor. Where co-supervisors are appointed, one is to be identified as the main supervisor.

<sup>3</sup> An open contract of employment carries full employment rights and has no fixed end date. Some staff with proleptic appointments will have open contracts depending on the nature of their individual contracts of employment. For further information see: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/policies/contracts.html>

### *5.2.3 Appointment criteria for co-supervisors*

The following categories of staff may not be the main supervisor of a research degree candidate, but may act as a co-supervisor with the permission of the Graduate Education Director.

- Visiting Professors and Visiting Research Fellows, provided that they will be in post for the duration of the student's degree and are able to maintain regular contact with the student.
- Emeritus and retired members of staff, provided that they continue to be research-active and are able to maintain regular contact with the student. Such staff are permitted to act as co-supervisor for continuing students but should not be appointed to supervise new students.
- Members of staff who are themselves currently registered as candidates for research degrees.
- Members of academic staff who have yet to complete their initial service review.
- Members of staff on Academic Pathway 2, levels A or B (for example, Research Associates).
- Honorary and technical staff with relevant expertise and experience.

Schools and faculties should enable new supervisors to have a 'mentor' during their first few years in the role. Mentors must be established supervisors who have experience of supervising one or more research students to successful completion of their degree and who have a good understanding of the relevant University, faculty and school policies and procedures.

### *5.2.4 Supervision of joint or dual doctoral awards with staff from elsewhere*

Arrangements for the supervision of joint or dual awards with staff from elsewhere are only permitted in cases where the University has a formal partnership agreement in place with the other institution/organisation, in line with the University's *Policy on Joint and Joint Doctoral Awards* at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/>. In such cases, the main supervisor will be designated in accordance with the contractual obligations agreed with the partner institution/organisation in advance.

If a student is studying for a doctoral award at an affiliated institution, as defined in Ordinance 23, the main supervisor may be a member of staff of that institution with Honorary Academic Status at the University. In such cases, an academic member of staff from the University of Bristol will normally be appointed as co-supervisor. However, in exceptional circumstances, a suitably qualified member of staff from the affiliated institution may be appointed as co-supervisor with the permission of the Graduate Education Director.

### *5.2.5 External supervision*

For some research students it may be necessary to appoint an external supervisor to provide particular expertise within the supervisory team, or if the research project involves a collaboration with an external organisation.

External supervisors will be based in, for example, professional practice or industry. Honorary staff at the University of Bristol are not deemed to be external supervisors. In addition, supervisors from other Higher Education Institutions appointed as part of joint or

dual awards are not covered by this term (see Section 5.2.4 on supervision of joint or dual doctoral award with staff from elsewhere).

The role of the external supervisor is to complement the knowledge and expertise of the University of Bristol supervisors, and to provide a critical commentary on the planned research and on the work undertaken. Enabling access to facilities and/or other resources that would otherwise be unavailable to the student may also form part of the role.

An external supervisor may only be appointed where this is covered by a partnership agreement.

Where a research student has an external supervisor, the role of this supervisor within the team must be defined in the partnership agreement. External supervisors must be able to fulfil the University's expectations for the role and should have opportunities to engage in developmental and training activities.

If the main purpose of the role is to enable access to facilities and/or other resources, it may be more appropriate to organise a local support contact for the student, rather than appointing a formal external supervisor. A local support contact would not be part of the supervisory team, would not be involved in providing a critical commentary on the research, and would not have to be covered by a partnership agreement.

#### *5.2.6 Training for supervisors*

All new staff (Senior Lecturer/Lecturer or equivalent) will be required to complete a development session to support and prepare them for doctoral research supervision at Bristol. Existing staff are encouraged to undertake continued professional development.

### **5.3 Change of supervisor**

#### *5.3.1 Responsibility of the Head of School*

The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that research students have continuous supervision during their period of registered study. If a supervisor is absent for an extended period, leaves the University, or if there is an irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship, the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that adequate supervisory support is maintained, including putting alternative arrangements in place where appropriate.

Where a change of supervisor is required, the Head of School (or nominee) must keep the student informed throughout the process. Replacement supervisors must meet the criteria for appointment in 5.2.2 for main supervisors and in Section 5.2.3 for co-supervisors.

The Head of School (or nominee) must take into account the requirements of any sponsors. Where a student is funded on a studentship attached to a particular supervisor or is on a specific research grant, it may not be possible to change supervisor. There may also be other circumstances where it is not feasible to change a supervisor.

In some circumstances, it may not be possible to identify a new supervisor for a student from within the University. If this is the case, the Head of School (or nominee) will explore options with the student.

### *5.3.2 Temporary unexpected absence of a supervisor*

Where a supervisor is temporarily absent for an unexpected reason (for example, through illness), the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that the research student continues to receive adequate supervision, which could include a new temporary arrangement for the duration of the absence. Students must be informed of their new first point of contact if it is their main supervisor who is unavailable.

Where the period of unexpected absence of a main supervisor is anticipated to exceed six months, the Head of School (or nominee) will normally appoint a permanent replacement or explore other options with the student.

### *5.3.3 Temporary planned absence of a supervisor*

Where a supervisor has a planned temporary absence that prevents them from being reasonably accessible, the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that the research student continues to receive adequate supervision. This could include a new temporary arrangement. Students must be informed of their new first point of contact if it is their main supervisor who is unavailable.

### *5.3.4 Breakdown in the supervisory relationship*

If the relationship between a research student and their supervisor/s starts to break down, the Head of School (or nominee) will make available an alternative and independent source of advice to the student. In cases where the relationship suffers an irreconcilable breakdown, new supervisory arrangements or further options may be considered.

### *5.3.5 Requests to change supervisory arrangements*

Supervisory responsibilities may be changed at the request of a research student or a supervisor to the Head of School (or nominee), who must take into account the requirements of any sponsors. Normally, any change of supervisor will be by mutual agreement between the student and the University.

### *5.3.6 Supervisors who move to other institutions*

When a supervisor moves to another institution, the Head of School (or nominee) will explore the options available to the research student. This will take into account any sponsor requirements. It may be possible for co-supervision to continue at a distance, but the main supervisor must always meet the requirements set out in Section 5.2.2. Allocating a replacement supervisor from within the University may be the most appropriate action in these cases.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to take all reasonable measures to appoint replacement supervisors or to facilitate supervision at a distance. In some circumstances however it may be more appropriate for the student to transfer to the supervisor's new institution.

### *5.3.7 Supervisors who leave*

When a supervisor leaves the University but does not move to another institution (for example, through retirement), the Head of School (or nominee) will explore the options available to the research student, including whether there is an appropriate replacement supervisor.

It is possible however for retired members of staff to act as a co-supervisor for continuing students, as per Section 5.2.3.



## 6 Progress and review arrangements

### 6.1 Student performance and monitoring of progress

The University expects research students to make good progress in their studies and to complete their research within the normal study period for the award. The progress of research students is monitored to ensure that student completion rates remain high and in order to comply with statutory reporting to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

All research students must be monitored in terms of attendance and performance and if, at any time, a student's progress is identified as being unsatisfactory, or the standard of their work is below that which is expected, the enhanced academic support process in Section 6.3 must be followed. If academic progress remains unsatisfactory, the procedure in Annex 3 will be initiated. The faculty must provide clear guidance on progress review processes and systems. The main supervisor must make the student aware of these requirements.

#### 6.1.1 *Research degree programmes that contain a taught component*

The assessment, monitoring and progression requirements of any taught components that are part of a research degree programme must be clearly set out. The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>, apply to the assessment of any taught components.

### 6.2 Annual progress review

The annual progress review gives research students the opportunity to engage in dialogue about their research and explore ideas with other academics. It should provide useful preparation for oral examinations and excellent training in academic discourse.

A student's personal and professional development should form a component of the review as a consideration of their whole progress and development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 10

Disabled students should be offered reasonable adjustments that take into account their disability for the purpose of assessment. Research students should be signposted to Disability Services for a Disability Support Summary, which will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments appropriate for the student in any assessment, such as progression processes, presentations, or the oral examination. Students and staff should contact Disability Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>) for advice about reasonable adjustments to assessment.

Continued registration for a research degree (doctoral and Masters) is conditional upon making satisfactory progress. The purpose of the mandatory annual progress review process is to establish that progress is satisfactory and, if not, to ensure that remedial action is taken promptly. Both full-time and part-time research students must be reviewed annually. The expectations for the annual progress of part-time students should be adjusted appropriately to reflect their part-time status.

Annual progress reviews vary from faculty to faculty, but must always involve:

- a written report or piece of work, and completion of a review form by the student;
- as an aid to students developing an understanding of academic integrity and appropriate referencing, any substantial written reports submitted as part of the annual progress review must also be submitted for text comparison checking, with the originality report being discussed by the student with at least one of the following: a supervisor, the annual progress review panel or another academic;
- an independent assessment of the submitted work and student's progress during the review period; and
- comments from both the student and the main supervisor.

All comments, feedback and recommendations arising from the annual progress review, including confirmation that the student has discussed the results of the text comparison check of any substantial written report with an academic, will be evaluated by the relevant Graduate Education Director (or nominee).

The student will see and comment on the written report on their progress.

The normal outcome of the annual progress review is that the student progresses to the next year, either unconditionally or subject to the completion of specific targets.

In addition to these minimum University requirements, there may be subject-specific or programme requirements for satisfactory progress, especially if the student is funded by an external sponsor. A student and their main supervisor must discuss a sponsor's additional progress monitoring requirements at an early stage to ensure that these may be met in good time.

The University expects schools to set up a formal review of progress at least once a year, for three main purposes:

1. to ensure that the student is well supported and able to overcome any practical or academic obstacles to progress;
2. to enable the student or supervisor to communicate and explain any concerns about progress since the previous meeting; and
3. to encourage the student to reflect upon, and plan for, academic progress alongside their own personal and professional development.

## **6.3 Enhanced academic support**

### *6.3.1 Introduction*

Where there are concerns that are affecting a research student's academic progress, enhanced academic support within the school will be provided. Such support should be tailored to the individual and take into account any extenuating circumstances the student is experiencing. It may be appropriate to consider options such as suspension or part-time working.

If progress is still not satisfactory at the end of the period of enhanced academic support, the unsatisfactory academic progress procedure set out in Annex 3 will be initiated.

Schools must ensure that students are made aware of this potential outcome when they enter into a period of enhanced academic support.

Written records must be kept of all informal and formal meetings at which a student's academic progress is considered and will be copied to all participants and filed securely in the school. Students will be invited to sign off action plans to indicate that they have seen and understood the plans. Where feasible, students should be informed of progress decisions in person, but if this is not possible it should be via their University email address. Failure by the student to agree records, to acknowledge progress decisions or to sign off an action plan will not delay the enhanced academic support process.

*Unless the context indicates otherwise, references within this procedure to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a nominee. References to the supervisor shall be taken to mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. Where the student's main supervisor is the school Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director<sup>4</sup> or Faculty Graduate Education Director, a nominee will be appointed.*

### 6.3.2 The enhanced academic support process

A supervisor, a reviewer, a PGR Programme Director or a school's PGR Director (or, exceptionally, another academic) may raise concerns about the academic progress of a research student at any stage in the programme of study. (If there is any disagreement between the supervisor and others about these concerns, the matter should be referred to the School's PGR Director or, exceptionally, to the Head of School for a decision.) As soon as the concern is confirmed, the supervisor must immediately make the student aware of the situation and notify the student and the School's PGR Director in writing that enhanced academic support has commenced. The student should be invited to say if there are any extenuating circumstances.

The supervisor and research student will meet as soon as possible to draw up a plan of activities ("Plan 1") to be completed within the following three months (or six months for a part-time student). Plan 1 will include the activities and expected outputs, the likely frequency and duration of supervisory meetings, any other support that will be made available, and finally how progress will be assessed at the end of the period of enhanced academic support. The supervisor will then provide the student and the school's PGR Director with a copy of Plan 1.

If at the end of the period specified in Plan 1, the supervisor and the school's PGR Director agree that progress is now satisfactory, the supervisor will confirm this in writing to the student and the school and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

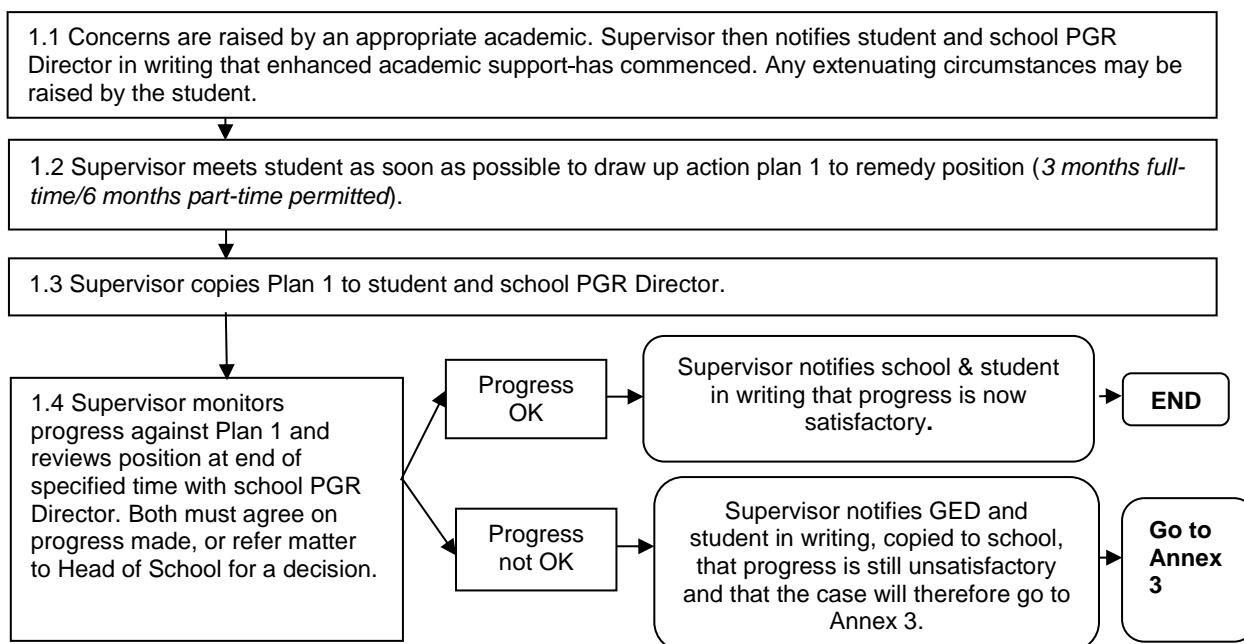
If at the end of the period specified in Plan 1, the supervisor and the school's PGR Director agree that progress is still not satisfactory, the supervisor will notify the student and the Faculty Graduate Education Director (GED) in writing, copied to the school's PGR Director. This will initiate the unsatisfactory academic progress procedure set out in Annex 3.

If the supervisor and the school's PGR Director are unable to agree on whether or not progress is satisfactory, they must refer the case to the Head of School for a decision.

<sup>4</sup> References to the school PGR Director shall mean the holder of the equivalent office in schools or faculties where this title is not used.

The enhanced academic support process is summarised in the flowchart in Section 6.3.3

### 6.3.3 Flowchart of the enhanced academic support process.



## 6.4 Interruptions and changes to study

### 6.4.1 Suspension of study

A suspension of study may be granted to research students who need to interrupt their studies. This is often because of circumstances largely beyond their control, for example ill-health, family or financial problems, but may also be agreed if the student wishes to take advantage of a specific career opportunity or for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. Periods of suspension must be as short as is necessary to address, or to take advantage of, the situation. Suspensions will not be backdated for more than one month.

The *Policy for Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave for Research Students* is in Annex 12. The *Medical Absence Policy for Funded Research Students* (in Annex 13) may also be relevant for students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol and/or by a UK Research Council.

Where a student has suspended on health grounds that are related to an existing disability or a new health condition, which is likely to last 12 months or more, the student should be signposted to Disability Services to discuss appropriate support. More broadly, students who have suspended should be encouraged to check the availability of support with individual services as there may be limited access to some areas of Student Services for suspended students.

Students approaching the end of a period of suspension that has been granted for health reasons may be required to produce a letter from a medical practitioner confirming that the student is fit to return to studies. If towards the end of a period of suspension the student is not fit to return to studies, they must apply for a further suspension of study before the first one ends.

A period of suspension will be excluded when calculating the submission date, but does not alter the student's maximum period of study (see Section 4.3.1). The suspension puts a pause on study; it does not extend the period allowed for study. Periods of suspension will be included in the calculation of the maximum completion period (see Section 4.3.2).

The University's *Fitness to Study Policy* (available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>) is a point of reference in this area. Fitness to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student, in relation to academic studies and life generally at the University.

#### 6.4.2 Extension of study

Permission to extend the period of study may be granted in exceptional circumstances, with compelling reasons and support from the research student's supervisor and school, **provided application is made well before the period of study is due to end.** Supervisors should therefore review a student's progress no later than four months before they are due to finish. The student should make a request for an extension, if required, shortly after this review.

An extension will extend the maximum period of study and therefore increases the time taken by the candidate to complete the degree. It will also be included in the calculation of the maximum completion period (see Section 4.3.2).

An additional fee may be payable during the period of extension of studies.

The Graduate Education Director of the faculty in which the research student is registered may approve periods of suspension or extension of study for a maximum of 12 months in total. Any request that takes the total period of suspension or extension of study over 12 months requires the approval of the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies).

Requests for suspension or extension, made on the appropriate form, must be accompanied by supporting evidence. Such evidence should include medical reports as appropriate, relevant correspondence and a work plan covering the extra time requested. Medical evidence will be treated in confidence.

In all cases, the request for extension or suspension must be sent to the Graduate Education Director for the faculty in the first instance. Requests sent on to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) must include a covering letter from the Graduate Education Director, summarising the main points and confirming faculty support.

**Any suspension or extension of the period of study of a visa-holding student must be reported to the relevant Faculty Office as soon as it is known, in order to meet the reporting requirements of the UK Government.**

Any funding body rules on extensions and suspensions will be additional to those of the University. The student must ensure that, where relevant, the approval of any relevant funding body has been obtained before a suspension or extension is granted by the University.

#### 6.4.3 Changes in mode of attendance

Research students may request to change their mode of attendance from full-time to part-time, or vice versa. Possible reasons for such a request could include changes in a student's personal or employment circumstances. Health reasons however should not be considered

unless medical evidence indicates that the change would be of assistance to the student. A suspension, as described in Section 6.4.1, would generally be more appropriate for ill health.

A student undertaking a research degree programme may change their mode of attendance a maximum of twice during the programme. The faculty Graduate Education Director will consider requests beyond this maximum if there are exceptional circumstances.

A UK Research Council or other funding body would need to be informed of, and may need to give approval for, changes in the mode of attendance for a sponsored student. The University's regulation on changes to the mode of attendance is necessarily subordinated to the sponsor's conditions in those cases.

It is not possible for international students who are studying in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa to study part-time and they must therefore be registered on a full-time degree.

## 7 Development of research and other skills

The University recognises the importance of the development of the research and generic skills of research students, both in order to increase their effectiveness as researchers during their studies and to underpin their subsequent careers. Training in research skills is the cornerstone of a research student's development, while transferable skills are widely recognised as essential in most forms of employment, including academia.

Faculties and schools may have different needs and therefore different approaches to analysing the training needs of a research student, but both the student and their supervisors will normally be involved. Supervisors have a fundamental role in encouraging their students to take up training and skills development opportunities and to apply the skills they have gained in their research work.

Training needs should be assessed at the beginning of study and reassessed at regular intervals during the research student's programme, including as part of the annual progress review. Research students should consider using the University's Skills Training and Review (STaR) system to map and plan their personal and professional development activities.

Faculties and schools offer appropriate skills development programmes for their disciplines. Research skills and techniques depend on the student's research area, and this training is best delivered at a local level, with the student's supervisor playing a key role.

There are many opportunities for research students to attend skills development training that supports the successful completion of their programme. Details of the central Personal and Professional Development programme can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/>.

### 7.1 The University's minimum requirements in respect of skills development are:

All research students will have access to training and development in research skills and techniques, normally provided by schools and faculties, and in generic skills through the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme.

From the start of a research degree programme onwards, the supervisors and student should regularly review the student's training needs together to identify relevant and appropriate opportunities, which may be within or external to the University. Students may require more guidance and support towards the start of their studies, with the expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 10.

Where a funding body has required specific training to be undertaken, the school, supervisor and student have responsibility, in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement, for ensuring that these requirements are met in a timely manner.

## 8 Student representation

Research students have a variety of opportunities for giving feedback on all aspects of their experience and are actively encouraged to engage with these.

All schools and faculties must have in place mechanisms by which research students are able to feed in their views and ideas. Collective feedback is often provided at school and/or faculty level through forums such as student/staff liaison committees or their equivalent. There may be a separate forum specifically for research students or this may be for postgraduates or all students in general. See also the *Code of Practice for Student Representation for Research Students*, which is available at <https://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/studentrep/> (University access only).

Research students are also invited to provide individual written feedback through programme, school or University questionnaires, as individuals.

*8.1 As a minimum, research students must be able to provide feedback on their experience through the following mechanisms:*

At University level: through student representation on Senate, Education Committee and University Graduate Studies Committee, and the opportunity to participate in regular surveys of research students and student forums.

At faculty level: through student representative membership at appropriate bodies; through contributing to forums enabling collective feedback about research student experiences; providing feedback on their experiences to members of Faculty Quality Teams.

At school level: through representative membership at appropriate bodies (such as student/staff liaison committees) and the opportunity to express views through questionnaires and discussions with supervisors and other members of academic staff.



## 9 Assessment

### 9.1 The assessment process

The purpose of the assessment process is to ascertain that candidates have reached the standard required by the criteria for the award set out in Annex 7 and in the regulations for the specific degree. Assessment must be operated fairly and consistently to ensure that the candidate has optimum opportunities to show their knowledge of the research topic and of the wider research field through the dissertation and the individual oral examination.

The assessment process set out here relates to the submission of the dissertation and the subsequent oral examination. Examiners make a preliminary assessment of the dissertation and conduct the oral examination. A recommendation from the examiners is then made to the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB), which makes the decisions about the award of research degrees. It is important that research students, supervisors and examiners understand that results recommended by examiners are provisional until approved by the RDEB. The RDEB may accept or revise the examiners' recommendation.

The Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) makes the decisions about the award of research degrees to assure consistency of academic standards across all faculties. Examiners may inform the candidate of their recommendation after the oral examination but it must be made clear that the final decision rests with the RDEB, which may decide on a different result.

Some research degrees have a taught component that is assessed separately from the dissertation. Further information is available in the regulations for the specific degree (Annexes 1 and 2) and in the programme specifications for the degree (available on the University website at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/unit-programme-catalogue/AboutProgrammes.jsa>).

### 9.2 Submission of the dissertation

Once a dissertation has been submitted, it is not permissible to make any alterations prior to the oral examination unless this is required under the procedure for dealing with plagiarism as set out in Section 9.2.4 and Annex 8.

The dissertation must be submitted in accordance with Section 9.2.3. It is not permissible for the dissertation to be shared with examiners prior to the formal submission process without the consent of the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

#### 9.2.1 Content and format of the dissertation

The dissertation shall be written in English, except for candidates in Modern Languages, who may submit their dissertations in the language of the culture studied. In all other cases, permission to use another language must be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) at the request of the relevant Graduate Education Director. Whenever a dissertation is submitted in a language other than English, it must include an extended summary (approximately 5,000 words for a PhD dissertation) in English.

The dissertation must include a signed declaration stating how far the work contained in the dissertation is the candidate's own work and how far it has been conducted in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others.

#### *Proofreading and the dissertation*

Candidates have authorial responsibility for their dissertation and are encouraged to proofread their own work as this is an essential skill in academic writing. There may however be instances where it is appropriate for a candidate to seek assistance from a third party for proofreading as long as it does not alter the intellectual content of the dissertation. A third party may, for example, be a professional proofreader, another student, a friend or a family member.

Proofreading involves checking text and suggesting corrections for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, formatting and presentation.

A third-party proofreader must not add to the content of the dissertation in any way, including through checking, amending or suggesting ideas, arguments, subject matter, or the structure of the dissertation, as this would compromise the authorship of the work.

A third-party proofreader may suggest corrections on the presentation of references that are poorly formatted, but must not propose new references.

The candidate remains responsible for the content of the dissertation and must not accept advice from a third-party proofreader beyond the defined parameters. Failure to follow this requirement may constitute plagiarism.

There may however be cases where enhanced proofreading assistance has been approved as a reasonable adjustment for disability.

Guidance on the format of the dissertation, and an example of the declaration which must be included, are available at Annex 4.

A candidate must not submit as their dissertation work which they have already submitted for an academic award of the University of Bristol or of any other degree awarding body.

The dissertation must not exceed the maximum word count stated in the specific regulations for the degree. Unnecessary length of a dissertation may be to a candidate's disadvantage.

#### *9.2.2 Timing of submission*

The dissertation may be submitted at any time between three months before the end of the minimum period of study and the end of the maximum period of study (unless stated otherwise in the regulations for the specific degree). It must be submitted within the maximum period of study.

A candidate whose period of study has been extended must submit their dissertation by the end of the extended maximum period of study.

Dissertations submitted after the end of the maximum period of study (taking into account any approved period of suspension or extension) will not be examined.

The minimum and maximum periods of study for the degree are listed in Section 4.3. If a suspension or extension is granted this will extend the period of study (see Section 6.4).

The candidate should prepare a detailed timetable for final preparation and submission of the dissertation, in consultation with their supervisors, at least six months before the end of the period of study.

As set out in Section 5.1.2, responsibility for the content of the dissertation and the decision to submit the work rests with the candidate. Comments from supervisors in this process are advisory.

Any submissions made more than three months before the end of the minimum period of study require prior approval by the relevant Graduate Education Director. Early submission will not affect liability for tuition fees.

### 9.2.3 *Method of submission*

The candidate must submit an electronic copy of their dissertation for text comparison checking in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 9.2.4.

The candidate must also submit a hard copy of their dissertation for each of their examiners, in temporary bindings, to the Academic Quality and Policy Office. For most candidates, the required number of copies will be two but in cases where there are more than two examiners, further copies will be required.

The dissertation will only be shared with examiners once the text comparison process has been successfully completed and the hard copies have been submitted. The dissertation must only be sent to the examiners by, or at the specific request of, the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

The hard copies of the candidate's dissertation will be distributed to the examiners who may also request an electronic copy from the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

### 9.2.4 *Checking for plagiarism*

Plagiarism is claiming the work of others, intentionally or by omission, as one's own. See also Section 9.2.1 on proofreading and the dissertation. If a candidate re-uses their own work from an earlier award, assignment or publication without acknowledgement this is classified as self-plagiarism. In order to avoid this issue research students are recommended to follow the guidance below:

- a) It is NOT permitted to submit the same work for two separate awards, whether the awards are both at the University of Bristol and/or elsewhere. If a candidate wishes to include, in whole or in part, work that has previously been submitted at the University of Bristol or elsewhere, for an award for which they are currently registered, then it is essential that this is clearly cited and referenced correctly with the previous award

identified. It is important that candidates realise that Higher Education Institutions cannot award credit multiple times for the same piece of work so it is recommended that the inclusion of previously submitted work is only done sparingly and following discussion and guidance from the supervisory team.

- b) Research students are strongly encouraged to publish their work, including prior to submission and examination. However, it is essential that they include appropriate referencing of such published work in their dissertation. A summary of authors' contributions to any publications resulting from the dissertation should be included within the dissertation to provide clarity on each author's contribution.
- c) Individual faculties and schools may have additional policies and guidelines regarding the inclusion of published work in a thesis. Students should consult their supervisors to determine if there are any additional considerations that pertain to them.

The University reserves the right to use all legitimate means at its disposal to detect instances of plagiarism. Submitted work is therefore checked in accordance with the procedure set out in Annex 8. Plagiarism may also be detected by examiners as part of the examination process.

If plagiarism is detected through electronic text checking or by the examiners, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in Annex 8.

#### 9.2.5 *Deferred access to the dissertation*

At any time before the submission of the final dissertation, the candidate may request deferred access to their dissertation. A deferral request must specify a reasonable period to meet the specific circumstances, such as preparing for publication, commercial confidentiality or individual sensitivities. Deferrals may be subject to funder and/or sponsor conditions. In exceptional circumstances, deferrals may be granted for an indefinite period.

All requests to defer access must specify the reason and include a recommendation by the faculty's Graduate Education Director. Details of the procedure to be followed, and the corresponding application form, are available at

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/deferred-access/>.

Deferrals of up to twelve months will be granted on the recommendation of the Graduate Education Director. For requests for deferrals of over twelve months, the final decision rests with the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies).

Even if a request for deferment is granted, copies of the final form of the dissertation must still be submitted as described in Section 9.6.2.

## **9.3 Examiners**

### *9.3.1 Role of examiners*

The competence and independence of examiners is of fundamental importance to the integrity of the assessment process and in maintaining the academic standards of the University's research degrees.

In keeping with the importance that the University attaches to oral examinations being conducted fairly and consistently, examiners are invited to comment on the examination process in confidence to the Research Degrees Examination Board. There is also a section on the Examiners' Joint Report Form for the internal examiner to complete on the conduct of the examination unless there is an Independent Chair. If an Independent Chair has been appointed, they will complete a separate report on the conduct of the examination.

The examiners are jointly responsible for ensuring that the requirements for the assessment process in these Regulations and Code and in the regulations for the degree are followed.

Examiners should treat the candidate's work with strict confidence.

#### ***External examiner***

The main function of the external examiner is to assure that the academic standards of the research degrees awarded by the University are comparable with those at similar institutions. The external examiner normally takes the lead in the discussion of the candidate's work during the oral examination.

#### ***Internal examiner***

The internal examiner participates fully in the examination process and also acts as the examination co-ordinator (unless there is an Independent Chair), including:

- making arrangements for the oral examination in consultation with the Head of School;
- informing the candidate, the supervisor, any other individuals involved in the oral examination, and the Academic Quality and Policy Office of the time and place of the oral examination;
- giving the candidate at least ten days' notice in writing;
- ensuring, as required, that the candidate receives the examiners' list of suggested corrections; and
- ensuring that examiners' reports are submitted to the Head of School in accordance with the University's requirements.

#### ***Independent Chair***

An Independent Chair, who would also act as the examination co-ordinator, will be appointed:

- a) where there are two external examiners and no internal examiner;
- b) where the internal examiner is inexperienced; or

- c) where the faculty Graduate Education Director considers that the presence of an experienced academic would assist in ensuring that the examination is fair and conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined.

The faculty Graduate Education Director will ensure that the candidate is aware that an Independent Chair will be appointed.

To be appointed, the Independent Chair must:

- a) be an academic member of staff at the University of Bristol;
- b) have a good understanding of the University's procedures and regulations for the award being examined; and
- c) have extensive experience of oral examinations as an examiner.

The Independent Chair must not have had any prior involvement with the project or with the candidate.

An Independent Chair is not expected to read the dissertation in preparation for the examination. They must however receive copies of the examiners' preliminary reports and must preside over discussions concerning issues raised in those reports and the plans for conducting the oral examination. An Independent Chair may make a request to the Academic Quality and Policy Office to have access to an electronic copy of the dissertation for reference if this will assist them in undertaking their role.

An Independent Chair oversees the oral examination and the deliberations of the examiners in reaching their recommendation. In the case of disagreement between the examiners, the Chair is confined to advising the examiners on their options and should use their best endeavours to assist the examiners in reaching agreement. The Independent Chair does not have a casting vote.

The Independent Chair's responsibility normally includes the administrative duties of the internal examiner. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, the candidate may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. The Independent Chair must also ensure that corrections are approved when there is no internal examiner.

The Independent Chair must complete a report after the oral examination to confirm that it was conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined.

### 9.3.2 *Selection of examiners*

Two or more examiners will be appointed, at least one being external to, and independent of, the University, and one normally being a member of the academic staff of the University.

Internal examiners will normally be a non-probationary member of academic staff at the University of Bristol holding an open contract of employment of at least 0.5FTE. Exceptionally, an honorary or emeritus member of staff who meets the selection criteria

may be an internal examiner, but this would usually be with the appointment of an Independent Chair to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined. University of Bristol honorary and emeritus staff cannot be external examiners.

Under specific circumstances, e.g. where required by the nature of the research undertaken or the nature of the award, a second external examiner may be appointed.

Where the candidate is a member of staff of the University, two external examiners will be appointed, unless approval has been obtained from the faculty Graduate Education Director to appoint an external and an internal examiner. The Graduate Education Director will determine whether there are any potential conflicts of interest or any other reason that could undermine the impartiality of the internal examiner before granting approval. This consideration will include candidates who may become members of staff prior to the award of the degree.

In the event that there is no internal examiner, a member of the academic staff of the University, independent of the candidate, the supervisor and the project, must be appointed to act as an Independent Chair for the examination. In such cases, the Independent Chair will participate in the oral examination only insofar as is needed to advise the external examiners on the University's regulations for the award being examined.

An Independent Chair will also be appointed if an internal examiner is inexperienced or if the faculty Graduate Education Director considers that the presence of an experienced academic will assist in the examination process.

Examiners for research degree candidates are nominated by the candidate's school and approved by the faculty Graduate Education Director. Both the school and the GED must be assured of the competence and independence of the examiners selected.

During the preparation of the dissertation, the candidate and their supervisors should discuss possible external and internal examiners. The main supervisor should suggest names of examiners to the Head of School no later than **four weeks** before the intended submission date, using the form available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/staff/research-degrees-staff-information/>.

The Head of School has overall responsibility for the nomination and appointment of appropriate examiners.

The criteria to be used when selecting external and internal examiners for research degrees are:

- The external examiner has the required expertise in the candidate's subject area. Emeritus members of staff from other universities may perform the role of external examiner if they are still appropriately active in the field.
- The examiners between them (including the Independent Chair if appointed) have adequate experience of examining research degrees for the same type of programme as that leading to the candidate's intended award.
- The internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) understands the requirements of the University's regulations that apply to this award.

- None of the examiners (or the Independent Chair if appointed) has any connection with the candidate, the research project or the supervisors or, in the case of external examiners, with the University, that might impair their ability to make a fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.
- Faculties have discretion in the selection of external examiners from other institutions that are part of collaborative partnerships or centres with the University as long as there are no connections to the student, project, supervisor, University or the collaborative partnership/centre that might impair, or call into question, the fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.
- Where the proposed internal examiner has participated in an annual progress review for the candidate, the faculty Graduate Education Director must be satisfied that the level of involvement with the research project has not impaired independence of judgement;
- Examiners are normally expected to hold a research degree at the level being examined or have other relevant expertise. It is not permissible for an individual who is registered for a research degree to be an examiner.
- A minimum period of five years must have elapsed before anybody who has held a post at the University may be nominated as an external examiner.
- To ensure that familiarity does not prejudice objective judgement, external examiners must not be appointed more than twice a year by the University. Any exceptions to this limit must be agreed by the faculty Graduate Education Director.
- It is important to ensure that there are no reciprocal arrangements with other institutions to provide examiners.

## 9.4 The Oral Examination

### 9.4.1 *The requirement for an oral examination*

Assessment of all research degrees includes an individual oral examination, unless permission for exemption has been granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

The oral examination is normally conducted within four months of submission of the dissertation.

### 9.4.2 *The role of the oral examination*

Examiners should discuss with the candidate the strengths as well as any weaknesses of the candidate's work. The oral examination enables the examiners to:

- question the candidate on the substance of the work submitted;
- assess the ability of the candidate to present and defend intellectual arguments;
- assess the candidate's general knowledge and understanding of the discipline and of the relevant literature; and



- verify that the work submitted is the candidate's own and assess the extent of any collaboration.

#### 9.4.3 Preparation

The candidate should be provided with suitable opportunities to practise for the oral examination by their school through, for example, presenting and being questioned about their research.

Examiners (and the Independent Chair if appointed) will normally meet before the start of the oral examination to discuss the issues identified in their preliminary reports and to plan how they will conduct the oral examination (for further information about examiners' preliminary reports see Section 9.5.1). Examiners may write on the examined work (e.g. to indicate minor errors).

The candidate, the candidate's supervisors, the candidate's Head of School and the examiners should avoid any action in the period leading up to the examination that might impair the ability of the examiners to make an impartial assessment of the candidate's work.

None of the examiners should be asked to comment on drafts of the candidate's work prior to the examination.

Candidates must not contact the external examiner for any reason, and may contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) with regard to their examination only to discuss the practical arrangements.

Examiners should not meet the candidate's supervisors prior to the examination.

The candidate's supervisors must not contact the external examiner on any matter relating to the examination, and may contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) only in respect of any special arrangements required for the oral examination.

#### 9.4.4 Observers

With the agreement of the candidate and the Head of School, the examiners may invite the candidate's supervisors or other persons (such as the candidate's industrial supervisor in the case of a collaborative project) to attend the examination as observers. Any observers would not see the preliminary reports and would withdraw before the examiners begin to consider their recommendations. The candidate may ask the faculty Graduate Education Director for permission, with the external examiner's consent, for the candidate's supervisor and/or any other observer to attend the oral examination. There is a clear distinction between an independent observer, as described in this section, and an Independent Chair as set out in Section 9.3.1.

Supervisors or other observers may not contribute to discussion during the oral examination, and must withdraw before the examiners begin to consider their recommendations.

#### 9.4.5 Reasonable adjustments to the assessment of research students with disabilities

Disabled students should be offered reasonable adjustments that take into account their disability for the purpose of assessment. Research students should be signposted to Disability Services for a Disability Support Summary, which will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments appropriate for the student in any assessment, such as progression processes, presentations, or the oral examination. Students and staff should contact Disability Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>) for advice about reasonable adjustments to assessment.

#### 9.4.6 Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances external to study within the University that a student believes may affect their performance in assessment.

Candidates, their supervisors and the Head of School share the responsibility for making examiners (and the Independent Chair if appointed) aware of any extenuating circumstances that need to be taken into consideration during the conduct of the oral examination. Where appropriate, a written statement supported by relevant evidence should be provided, via the Academic Quality and Policy Office, before the dissertation is submitted.

Any extenuating circumstances that might affect the candidate's performance in the oral examination should be brought to the attention of the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) as early as possible, normally not later than one month before the oral examination. It is however recognised that in some cases extenuating circumstances may emerge closer to the examination. Examiners will make appropriate adjustments to the conduct of the examination, seeking specialist advice where required. Relevant information and guidance is available on the University's Equality and Diversity website, <https://www.bris.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/>.

#### 9.4.7 Special arrangements

The faculty Graduate Education Director may, with the agreement of the candidate, approve special arrangements for conducting the oral examination, such as recording it. Requests, with appropriate justification, should be addressed to the faculty Graduate Education Director. Schools may seek agreement from the faculty Graduate Education Director for the regular use of such arrangements.

All participants must be informed in advance if the intention is to record an oral examination, and any objections must be considered by the faculty Graduate Education Director. At the oral examination, all participants must be notified that recording will take place prior to the start of the recording. The recording must stop at the formal close of the oral examination.

Files of recordings should be stored on secure University servers with access limited only to those who have a need to access the recordings. The University's *Information Handling Policy* (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/infosec/documents/ISP-07-v1.4.pdf>) must be complied with at all times. Recordings must be retained for a reasonable period after the oral examination and must be securely disposed of at the end of the retention period.

#### 9.4.8 Location

The oral examination with the candidate and all of the examiners normally takes place at the University of Bristol, but may take place elsewhere with the agreement of the examiners and the candidate and with permission from the relevant Graduate Education Director. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged when the oral examination is held away from the University of Bristol. An examination held elsewhere will not be allowed in any cases where the supervisor or the school PGR Director (or equivalent) feels that the candidate may be placed at a disadvantage.

In exceptional circumstances, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) may grant permission for either the candidate or an external examiner to participate remotely in the oral examination by video link. Where it is intended for the candidate **or** an external examiner to participate remotely by video link, the *Guidelines on the Conduct of Remote Oral Examinations by Video Link for Research Degrees* (Annex 5) must be followed.

#### 9.4.9 Conduct of the oral examination

All participants in the oral examination are expected to behave with respect, courtesy and academic integrity towards those present. The oral examination should be conducted in an appropriate and professional manner.

The oral examination must be conducted in English. In the case of a candidate in Modern Languages who has submitted a dissertation in a language other than English, the oral examination must be conducted in English, unless the relevant faculty Graduate Education Director has agreed a request from the candidate and the examiners to conduct the oral examination in the language of the culture studied.

The examiners are jointly responsible for ensuring that the oral examination is performed fairly, taking account of any special circumstances of which they have been made aware. Examiners should return the examined dissertation or published work to the candidate as soon as possible after the end of the examination.

### 9.5 Assessment Outcomes

#### 9.5.1 Examiners' reports

Prior to the oral examination, the examiners each complete an independent preliminary report in English. A joint report is then completed after the oral examination. Examiners' report forms are available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/staff/research-degrees-staff-information/>.

Reports should, where appropriate, include discussion of the:

- (a) purpose of the research and the overall approach taken;
- (b) candidate's application of research methods;
- (c) candidate's review of the literature;
- (d) extent of any collaboration;
- (e) candidate's contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the subject represented;
- (f) suitability for publication of the work reported;
- (g) literary form and quality of presentation of the work submitted, and the inferences

that can be drawn about the candidate's ability to present and defend intellectual arguments in writing;

- (h) candidate's general knowledge of the subject; and
- (i) candidate's performance in the oral examination, and the inferences that can be drawn about the candidate's ability to present and defend intellectual arguments verbally.

Each examiner must complete an independent preliminary report on the dissertation (or published work) before the oral examination, noting areas that should be explored with the candidate during the examination. Examiners must exchange their preliminary reports in advance of the oral examination.

The preliminary reports must be completed in English.

The examiners' judgement is based both on the work presented by the candidate and on the candidate's performance in the oral examination. Examiners should refer to the criteria for research degrees set out in Annex 7 and in the regulations for the degree in question to ascertain the standard required.

If an Independent Chair has been appointed, they must complete a report on the conduct of the examination. Similar information is collected from the internal examiner on the Examiners' Joint Final Report for examinations where there is no Independent Chair.

#### 9.5.2 *Examiner Recommendations*

If the examiners have agreed on a recommendation they may make this known to the candidate, but they must make it clear that the final decision rests with the RDEB, which may arrive at a different verdict.

After the oral examination, the examiners must complete a joint report that sets out clearly their recommendation with its supporting rationale. The joint report must be completed in English.

Examiners may recommend that:

- A The degree sought be awarded unconditionally.
- B The degree sought be awarded subject to the correction of minor errors to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that minor corrections are approved by an external examiner or by a University of Bristol academic nominated by the School.
- C The degree sought be awarded once errors or omissions of substance have been corrected to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- D The degree sought not be awarded but that the candidate be permitted to re-submit a revised form of the dissertation or published work for examination.
- E *(doctoral candidates only)*  
The relevant degree of Master by research be awarded unconditionally.
- F *(doctoral candidates only)*  
The relevant degree of Master by research be awarded, subject to the correction of minor errors to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that minor corrections

are approved by an external examiner or by a University of Bristol academic nominated by the School.

**G** *(doctoral candidates only)*

No degree be awarded but that the candidate be permitted to re-submit a revised form of the dissertation or published work for examination for the relevant degree of Master by research.

**H** No degree be awarded and permission be not granted to re-submit the dissertation or published work.

*Award of the degree of Master by research (doctoral candidates only)*

A Masters degree is not to be awarded merely because the dissertation has failed to reach the requirements for the award of a doctoral level degree. Examiners should only recommend the award of a Masters degree when the dissertation and oral exam meet the criteria for a Masters degree by research as specified in Annex 7.

If the conclusions of the examiners' joint report differ significantly from those of any of the preliminary reports, the examiners should justify the changes in their joint report.

If, exceptionally, the examiners cannot agree on a joint report after the oral examination, they should submit separate final reports.

### 9.5.3 Corrections

The candidate should receive written guidance on any corrections as soon as possible after the oral examination. They may meet with the internal examiner on one occasion, or may alternatively seek one e-mail response from the internal examiner, to clarify the changes required by the examiners. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the candidate may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. Any further clarification and advice should be sought from the candidate's supervisors.

The time allowed for correction of errors of substance or for resubmission is irrespective of whether the candidate was previously registered as a full-time or part-time student. If, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate requires an extension of the agreed period, they must make an application in writing to the RDEB, via the Academic Quality and Policy Office, indicating their reasons and providing supporting evidence if appropriate, and stating a date by which the corrections will be made or the dissertation resubmitted.

#### *Minor errors*

**Annex 6** sets out guidance on what constitutes minor errors in a dissertation. Examiners should make clear what, if any, corrections are required. Minor corrections should be completed within **28 days** of the notification from the Research Degrees Examination Board at which the examiners' reports are considered (RDEB meeting dates are available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/research-exam-board/>). If such corrections are incomplete, the candidate will be entitled to attend a degree congregation, but the degree certificate will be withheld until written confirmation by the internal examiner that the corrections have been made is received by the Academic Quality and Policy Office. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that minor corrections are approved by an external examiner or by a University of Bristol academic nominated by the School.

Where there are numerous instances of errors that are individually minor but when taken together are deemed by the examiners to form a significant undertaking for the candidate to correct, a recommendation of errors of substance may be made.

#### *Errors of substance*

If substantial errors or omissions are to be corrected, examiners must provide clear written guidance for the candidate as soon as possible after the oral examination. A copy of the guidance must be attached to the examiners' final report.

Candidates are not permitted to contact the external examiner, but may contact the internal examiner once for clarification of the revisions required. In cases where there is no internal examiner, candidates may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. The time permitted for corrections for all candidates is normally six months from the date of the meeting of the RDEB at which the decision is made. In exceptional circumstances, an extension beyond this period may be granted by the RDEB.

If the student has submitted the corrected dissertation within the deadline but the examiners are not satisfied with the corrections, the examiners may agree to allow up to four additional weeks for the candidate to make further, minor modifications. The additional period will start when the examiners have sent their further comments to the candidate. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair where there is no internal examiner) must inform the Academic Quality and Policy Office of the additional time given.

A dissertation corrected for errors of substance will not be accepted if it is submitted after the time permitted, in which case candidature for the degree will lapse.

The internal examiner should inform the Academic Quality and Policy Office, in writing, of the satisfactory completion of the correction of errors of substance to the satisfaction of both examiners. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that corrections are approved by the external examiners.

#### 9.5.4 *Resubmission*

If a candidate is required to resubmit their dissertation for re-examination, examiners must provide clear and comprehensive written guidance for the candidate. Apart from contacting the internal examiner, once only, for clarification of the revisions required, the candidate may not contact the examiners for any reason in connection with the examination. In cases where there is no internal examiner, candidates may make a request for clarification of the revisions required to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose.

Supervisors will provide continued guidance to candidates who have to resubmit. The level of support will be determined by the nature and extent of the work required by the examiners.

Resubmission can take place once only. The maximum time permitted for resubmission for all candidates is normally 12 months from the date of the meeting of the RDEB at which the decision is made. An extension beyond this period may be granted by the RDEB only in exceptional circumstances. A revised dissertation will not be accepted if submitted after the time permitted, in which case candidature for the degree will lapse.

To resubmit, the candidate must submit an electronic copy for checking and provide the appropriate number of hard copies of their revised dissertation to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (see Section 9.2.3) within the period specified by the RDEB, and pay the resubmission fee. Unless determined otherwise by the RDEB, the original examiners will be asked to undertake a full re-examination, normally including a further oral examination.

If, once the examiners have read the resubmitted work, the examiners agree that no purpose would be served by holding a further oral examination, and that the work is worthy of the award of the degree for which the work has been submitted (with or without correction of minor errors), they have the discretion to waive the second oral examination. The examiners' reports should include an explanation of why the examiners felt that a further oral examination was unnecessary.

The examiners should provide a complete new set of examiners' reports to RDEB. This will include a report from the Independent Chair (if appointed). External examiners will be paid a re-examination fee.

#### *9.5.5 The procedure following the oral examination*

Examiners' preliminary and joint reports are confidential until they have been considered by the RDEB. Reports must not be shared with the candidate or supervisors prior to RDEB.

After consideration by RDEB, the reports are sent to the candidate (and supervisor) where there are errors of substance or a requirement to resubmit, or if the student is to be awarded a lower degree than the one for which they were submitted. In other circumstances, the reports are available on request. The report from the Independent Chair (if appointed) on the conduct of the examination is also available on request.

The internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) should forward all examiners' reports, including the pre-oral examination preliminary reports, to the Head of School (or an alternative senior member of the school's academic staff if the Head of School is the candidate's supervisor or internal examiner) for countersigning. The Head of School (or nominee) should then forward the signed reports to the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The report from the Independent Chair (if appointed) on the conduct of the examination should be included with the reports.

Where the research degree includes a taught element, the Academic Quality and Policy Office attaches the report on this element to the examiners' reports for consideration by the RDEB.

The approval process by RDEB is set out in Section 9.6.

Reports should be sent to the Academic Quality and Policy Office to arrive within **14** days of the date of the oral examination.

## 9.6 Results

### 9.6.1 *Approval of recommendations*

The Examiners' recommendation is provisional until approved by the RDEB. The RDEB has the authority to agree, alter or reject the result recommended by the examiners.

The examiners' independent preliminary reports, their joint report and, where relevant, the report on the taught element of the degree must be sufficient to enable the RDEB to assess the scope and significance of the work submitted by the candidate and to determine whether the candidate satisfies the University's criteria for the award of the research degree. The RDEB also receives the report from the Independent Chair (if appointed) on the conduct of the examination.

The examiners' reports will be considered at the next practicable RDEB held after their receipt. Reports received less than two weeks before the date of the Board will not normally be considered until the following meeting. Dates of meetings of the RDEB and deadlines for receipt of reports are listed at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/research-exam-board/>.

The result of their examination will be sent to candidates by email and post normally within two weeks of the RDEB's decision.

### 9.6.2 *Requirements for submission of the final dissertation or published work*

Candidates must submit an electronic copy of the final dissertation within 28 days of the date of the award of the degree by the Board through the Pure website (<https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/pure>). Guidance on the formatting is available in Annex 4.

The electronic copy should be in pdf format (or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium), as agreed with supervisors and should normally be identical to the examined version except where any materials which risk breaching a third party's copyright, privacy or security require redaction from the publicly available copy.

Please see depositing guidance web pages for more information (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/staff/researchers/theses/>).

The dissertation will not appear in the repository until it has been approved by the Academic Quality and Policy Office and the Library.

Degree certificates are made available after degree ceremonies. The degree certificate will be withheld until the candidate has complied with the requirements for submission of the definitive form of the dissertation or published work and commentary as set out above.



## **10 Student appeals and complaints**

### **10.1 Appeals**

A research student may appeal against the decision of a Dean to terminate or change their registration or a decision of the Research Degrees Examination Board in respect of a decision relating to the award of a research degree.

### **10.2 Academic appeal procedure for research students**

The procedure governing appeals against a decision made by a Dean relating to termination or change of registration or of a decision made by the Research Degrees Examination Board relating to the award of a research degree is set out in the Examination Regulations Section 11, which can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>. No degree may be conferred while an appeal is outstanding.

### **10.3 Student Complaints**

The student complaints procedure is set out in the University's Rules and Regulations for Students, which are available at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>.

Schools should ensure that all students are made aware of how they may raise an individual or collective concern and how to make a formal complaint. Students also need to be advised where they may obtain confidential advice on academic and other issues.

As concerns raised at an early stage are more likely to be resolved quickly and effectively students are encouraged to raise any issue that concerns them at the earliest opportunity, initially informally with the appropriate person, who will in many cases be their supervisors. If a student is unable to discuss the issue with their supervisors, they should approach the school's nominated person in charge of postgraduate research programmes or the Head of School. Problems that cannot be resolved within the school should be referred to the faculty's Graduate Education Director.

Collective issues may be raised via the school and faculty student representative systems.

### **10.4 Useful sources of information**

There is a wide range of sources of help and advice that students may draw on. Detailed information is provided on the Current Student webpages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/>). The Students' Union "Just Ask" team offers a range of welfare advice and support (<http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support>).

### **10.5 Monitoring of complaints and appeals**

The Student Complaints Officer presents an annual report on appeals under these regulations to Senate and University Council. This report is also considered by the Student Affairs sub-committee of Council.

The Office of the Independent adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The OIA will only consider cases when the University's internal procedures have been exhausted. The OIA will not intervene in matters which turn purely on academic judgement.

## Regulations for specific doctoral degrees

### Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html> will apply to the assessment of any taught components of these degrees.

Candidature for the degree of PhD shall be either by dissertation or by published work.

#### 1. Candidature by dissertation

##### 1.1 Qualification for admission

Candidates should refer to the general statement of admissions requirements contained in Section 4 of the Regulations and Code.

##### 1.2 Qualification for the award

A candidate qualifies for the PhD by:

- (a) pursuing research for a period as specified in 1.3 below;
- (b) submitting a dissertation embodying the results of this research;
- (c) passing an oral examination on the dissertation conducted by examiners appointed by the University; and
- (d) satisfying any formal requirements set by the faculty or a sponsor for a curriculum of advanced study, or for satisfactory performance in any other prescribed work, during the period of PhD registration. Such requirements will be specified before admission.

##### 1.3 Period of study

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.

The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

Full-time PhD students funded by an official sponsor who were registered before 24 September 2018 may have an addition to their maximum period of study of up to twelve months if this was agreed as part of their registration. Any new full-time PhD students, who are funded by an official sponsor and who register through a doctoral training entity on an established PhD programme that was set up before 24 September 2018, may also have an addition to their maximum period of study of up to twelve months if the addition was agreed when the programme was initially formed. Doctoral training entities set up on or after 24 September 2018, including those that have been re-established following a re-bidding process, are not able to allow additions to the normal maximum period of study.

All other suspensions of study and extensions of period of study should take place as set out in Section 6.4 of the Regulations and Code.

#### **1.4 Submission of dissertation**

A candidate may submit their dissertation up to three months before the end of the minimum period of study. Any submission earlier than that requires prior approval by the Graduate Education Director of the faculty in which the candidate is registered.

Early submission will not affect tuition fee liability.

The dissertation must normally be submitted for examination by the end of the maximum period of study. A candidate whose period of study has been extended must submit their dissertation by the end of the extended maximum period of study.

#### **1.5 Length of dissertation**

Dissertations should not normally exceed 80,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Faculty-specific guidelines on references are available. Unnecessary length of a dissertation may be to a candidate's disadvantage.

#### **1.6 Transfer of registration**

The PhD programme may include opportunities for candidates to transfer registration to an appropriate Masters level award, as permitted by faculty regulations.

#### **1.7 Exit awards from PhDs with a taught component**

Where a PhD programme includes an integrated taught component, a candidate may be eligible for a taught exit award if they choose to leave before completing the doctoral programme, fail to satisfy the examiners in the research component, or if a student's registration is changed to that of an alternative degree by a Registration Review Panel (see Annex 3). In such cases, a candidate may be recommended for the award of a Masters, a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate, provided they have satisfied the requirements on total credits and the minimum number of credits required at the highest level, in accordance with the University's Credit Framework.

Candidates must have:

- a) for the award of a taught Masters, 180 credit points with at least 150 credit points at level 7;
- b) for the award of a PG Diploma, 120 credit points with at least 90 credit points at level 7; and
- c) for the award of a PG Certificate, 60 credit points with at least 40 credit points at level 7.

## **2. Candidature by published work**

### **2.1 Criteria for candidature by published work**

A PhD by published work must be of an equivalent standard to a PhD by dissertation.<sup>5</sup> A candidate's published work must therefore:

- a) relate in a coherent way to the field of knowledge and represent a significant and original contribution;
- b) show evidence of the candidate's capacity to pursue independently original research based on a good understanding of the relevant techniques and concepts; and

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<sup>5</sup> It is also permissible for the Engineering Doctorate (EngD) and the Doctor of Medicine (MD) to be undertaken by candidature by published work.

- c) make a contribution to research at a level and scope equivalent to the dissertation route.

The published work submitted may range over a number of different topics, but these must relate in a coherent way to a field of knowledge. The treatment of these topics should be substantial; greater weight will be attached to a few substantial publications than to a larger number of brief notes, and the rate at which the work has been done will be considered in the light of the circumstances under which the research was carried out. It is not normally possible to form an adequate judgement of the candidate's eligibility unless the amount of work submitted is considerable, having due regard to the nature of the discipline.

## **2.2 Eligibility**

Subject always to the criteria set out in 2.1, candidature for the degree of PhD by published work may be granted to:

- a) a graduate of the University of Bristol of not less than 6 years standing,
- b) a graduate of another university of not less than 6 years standing, who is a member of academic staff of the University of Bristol and has spent at least 3 years in the University.

## **2.3 Application**

The final decision on whether or not to permit a candidate to register for a PhD by published work rests with the Graduate Education Director of the relevant faculty, who must ensure that the candidate has published enough appropriate material to have a reasonable chance of being awarded a PhD. The Graduate Education Director will inform the relevant Head of School.

An application must include:

- a) a synopsis of approximately 500 words outlining the extent, range, quality and coherence of the work to be submitted;
- b) a list of the publications the candidate intends to submit; and
- c) a *curriculum vitae*, including details of the candidate's employment at the University of Bristol where relevant.

A candidate should not assume that permission to register for a PhD by published work will automatically result in the award of a PhD, as they have to pass the final examination in the same way as any other candidate.

## **2.4 Registration**

If approved, the candidate will be required to pay the relevant registration and submission fee. The candidate, once registered, will be assigned an advisor to support and guide them during the preparation of the work for submission. The advisor will be a senior member of academic staff at the University who is familiar with both the standard required and with the candidate's field of work.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to ensure that suitable advisors are appointed, that they have appropriate knowledge and skills, and that they have the time to carry out their advisory duties.

## **2.5 Submission**

Candidates must submit their published work within 12 months of the initial registration, unless an extension has been granted by the Graduate Education Director.

Candidates may include publications beyond those in their application portfolio as long as all publications are at least in press at the point of submission. The submission must be in accordance with Section 9.2.3 of the Regulations and Code and should consist of:

- a) the published work (which may include some papers in press);
- b) a substantial commentary that states the aims and nature of the research, that links the published work and its coherence, and that indicates the significance and the original contribution to the field made by the work in the opinion of the candidate;
- c) a signed statement advising how far the work submitted is based on the candidate's own independent study, making it clear for each publication how far the work was conducted in collaboration with or with the assistance of others and the conditions and circumstances in which the work was carried out; and
- d) a *curriculum vitae*, focusing on the candidate's research career and on the circumstances under which the research work leading to the publications submitted was carried out.

## **2.6 Examination**

The criteria for the appointment of examiners must be in accordance with Section 9.3 of the Regulations and Code, where references to supervisor should be read as advisor.

The oral examination must adhere to Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code.

## **Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Musical Composition (PhD in Musical Composition)**

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* (referred to throughout this document as "the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

### **1. Admission to the degree programme**

A candidate wishing to pursue a PhD in Musical Composition shall normally be registered in the first instance for the degree of MMus, and shall exceptionally be registered in the first instance for the degree of MPhil. A candidate who enters as an MMus student may, subject to achieving a satisfactory standard after two years of full-time (four years part-time) study, upgrade to the degree of PhD. A candidate who enters as an MPhil student may, subject to achieving a satisfactory standard after one year of full-time (two years part-time) study, upgrade to the degree of MMus and thence, after a further year (two years part-time), upgrade to the degree of PhD.

### **2. Qualification for the award**

The portfolio will comprise compositions for a variety of forces, of which at least one will be substantial in both medium and design. In general, all or most of the pieces will have been performed, and recordings should be included with the submitted scores. Electronic and mixed media submissions of equivalent merit and extent are equally permissible. The commentary will provide an intellectually rigorous account of the composer's creative landmarks and the nature of their contribution to the field of contemporary composition. It will elucidate issues of importance to the candidate (e.g. constructional, cross-cultural, technological, sociological or other) and demonstrate awareness of the broader context within which the work is situated.

The qualification for the degree shall be:

- a) submission of a portfolio of compositions (normally between five and seven) totalling c. 75 – 120 minutes of music;
- b) submission of an analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling c. 15,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media); and
- c) approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

### **3. Submission**

The submission must normally be made after three years and within four years (seven years part-time) of the date of initial registration for a research degree in Musical Composition.

## Regulations for the Degree of Engineering Doctorate (EngD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>, will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

### 1. Approved programmes of study

The degree of EngD may be awarded only in subjects approved by Senate. The subjects currently available are:

- Composites Manufacturing;
- Non-Destructive Evaluation; and
- Systems.

Each of these has a specified programme of study comprising a taught and research component.

### 2. Period of study

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.

The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

Full-time EngD students who were registered before 24 September 2018 have a maximum period of study of five years. Any new full-time EngD students who register through a doctoral training entity on an established EngD programme that was set up before 24 September 2018 will also have a maximum period of study of five years. Doctoral training entities set up on or after 24 September 2018, including those that have been re-established following a re-bidding process, have a four-year normal maximum period of study for full-time EngD students.

### 3. Qualification for the award

A candidate will qualify for the EngD by:

- a) passing the specified taught component;
- b) carrying out research at doctoral level and submitting a dissertation by the end of the specified period of study; and
- c) passing the final oral examination for the research component (as set out in Section 9 of the Regulations and Code).

### 4. Exit awards

If a candidate wishes, or is required, to withdraw before completing the research component of an EngD they may qualify for one of the taught exit awards specified in the relevant programme of study.

### 5. Content and length of dissertation

- (a) In addition to the standard criteria for assessment of a research degree as specified in Annex 7, a candidate for an EngD must also demonstrate a clear appreciation of the industrial context and significance of their research.

- (b) A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work provided this is clearly stated and the relevant work is clearly referenced in the dissertation.
- (c) Dissertations should not exceed 80,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents.

**6. Candidature by Published Work**

It is also permissible for the EngD to be undertaken through candidature by published work. The requirements and guidance on candidature by published work are held in the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Annex 1 above, where references to PhD should be read as EngD.



## **Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)**

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The degree of Doctor of Medicine shall be either by dissertation or by published work.

### **1. Candidature by Dissertation**

#### **1.1 Qualification for admission**

Candidature for the degree of Doctor of Medicine by dissertation shall be open to:

- a) Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery from UK Universities of not less than two years standing.
- b) Holders of equivalent degrees from overseas universities of not less than two years standing.

Individuals who comply with either a) or b) above must also be able to satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

- i) Previous research experience;
- ii) Evidence of publication in a related field; or
- iii) Evidence of contributing to successful research funding proposal(s).

#### **1.2 Qualification for the award**

The qualification for the degree by dissertation shall be:

- a) a period of original research on a project that satisfies the appropriate faculty's (Health Sciences or Life Sciences) criteria and is no less than two years (full time study) in length;
- b) a dissertation contributing to the advancement of medical knowledge, making a significant original contribution in the field of learning within which the subject falls, showing evidence of originality and independent critical powers, with satisfactory literary form; and
- c) approval of the dissertation by examiners appointed by the University

#### **1.3 Work previously submitted**

A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.

#### **1.4 Length of Dissertation**

Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage. The dissertation should not exceed 60,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents.

#### **1.5 Submission**

Except as permitted under Section 6 of the Regulations and Code, the dissertation shall be submitted within five years (comprising at least two years full time research) of the date of commencement of the project, for full-time candidates. For part-time candidates, the dissertation shall be submitted within seven years of the date of commencement of the project with a minimum period of study of four years. Candidates should refer to Section 9 of the Regulations and Code for requirements and guidance about submission of the dissertation.

**2. Candidature by Published Work**

The requirements and guidance on candidature by published work are held in the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Annex 1 above, where references to PhD should be read as MD.

## **Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)**

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>, will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

### **1. Introduction**

The degree of DDS is currently available in the area of Orthodontics.

### **2. Qualification for admission**

Bachelors of Dental Surgery who shall have passed the final examination for such degrees at least two years previously may be candidates for the degree of DDS by Advanced Study and Research.

### **3. Qualification for the award**

3.1 The qualification for the degree shall be:

- (a) pursuance of a curriculum of study;
- (b) submission of a dissertation based on research carried out by the candidate;
- (c) satisfactory performance in all prescribed work and assessments, approved by examiners appointed by the University; and
- (d) satisfactory completion of clinical assessments and/or placements.

3.2 The dissertation must represent a contribution to knowledge, showing evidence of originality and independent critical powers; a candidate must also satisfy the examiners through the dissertation, or in the examination, that they are well acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which the subject relates. Dissertations must in all cases contain original work worthy of publication and their literary form must be satisfactory. The examiners, one external and one internal, shall normally require the candidate to present themselves at the University for an oral examination of the dissertation.

3.3 In addition to the submission of the dissertation, candidates are also required to pass a clinically focussed examination in Dental Surgery. Where a candidate possesses a higher clinical dental qualification, or is listed in the General Dental Council's Specialist Register, the examiners may exempt them from a clinical examination in Dental Surgery.

### **4. Curriculum Content and Structure**

4.1 The curriculum will consist of not less than 3 years of full-time study or pro rata part-time.

4.2 Candidates must take not less than 180 credit points of taught modules at levels M and D, followed by not less than 360 credit points of study at level D comprising research and clinical practice.

### **5. Outcomes of the oral examination of the dissertation**

See Section 9.5 of the Regulations and Code.

### **6. Exit awards and withdrawal from the programme**

6.1 A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in the research component, who is permitted to transfer to a lower-level award or who would like to leave before completing the DDS may be

recommended for the award of a taught Masters or a PG Diploma in Orthodontics in accordance with the University Credit Framework.

- 6.2 In line with the University's regulations for taught programmes, if a student fails to achieve the required standard in summative written or clinical examinations there will normally only be one opportunity for reassessment. Failure to achieve the required standard after this point will normally result in withdrawal from the programme.
- 6.3 Failure to achieve satisfactory performance in the assessment of clinical skills will normally result in withdrawal from the programme.

## Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>, will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

### 1. Qualification for admission

Candidature for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology shall be subject to Section 4.1 of the Regulations and Code and the relevant admissions statement at:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/admissions-statements/>. This includes the requirement to undergo a DBS disclosure.

### 2. Qualification for the award

2.1 The qualification for the degree shall be:

- a) pursuance of a curriculum of advanced study;
- b) satisfactory completion of fieldwork placements;
- c) submission of a dissertation, representing a contribution to knowledge; and
- d) approval of such dissertation by examiners appointed by the University.

### 3. Period of study

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.

The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

For regulations concerning suspension of study or extension of the period of study, see Section 6 of the Regulations & Code.

### 4. Taught Stage

4.1 Students shall take taught units as prescribed in the programme structure, which can be found at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/unit-programme-catalogue/Welcome.jsa>.

4.2 Units will be marked on a 5 point scale, A – E, where the pass mark is C.

4.3 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. Additional criteria will be described in the unit description and School or Programme handbooks.

4.4 A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress. Resubmission of essays and coursework should normally be within 8-12 weeks of confirmation of the grade by the external examiner.

4.5 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award (if appropriate) unless there are validated extenuating circumstances. Refer to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for full details of extenuating circumstances processes.

4.6 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the recorded unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment.

4.7 During the taught stage, students are subject to Section 4 of the Examination Regulations covering plagiarism and cheating, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>.

## **5. Placement**

5.1 Students **must** successfully complete the required fieldwork placements. In year 1 there are three placements, totalling 94 days. In Year 2 and 3 students will undertake their required placement learning at their workplace for 3 days a week. Full details of the placement requirements can be found in the Programme Handbook.

5.2 The placements will be assessed via the following:

5.2.1 Professional Practice Portfolio;

5.2.2 Self-assessment profiles;

5.2.3 Summary reports provided by fieldwork supervisors; and

5.2.4 Completion of a 4,000 word assignment or equivalent for each practice-based unit.

## **6. Progression to Dissertation**

6.1 In order to be permitted to progress to the dissertation, students must meet the following criteria:

- a) Pass all taught units and fieldwork placements as prescribed in the programme of study.
- b) Successfully complete any pre-requisites designated by the programme as preparation for dissertation.
- c) Submit a research proposal, which must be approved by the School. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of the study and ability to complete the dissertation within the time limit.
- d) Obtain any ethical approval as required for the dissertation.

6.2 Once a student has progressed to the dissertation stage, they will be subject to progress monitoring arrangements as described in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code

## **7. Submission of dissertation**

7.1 A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.

7.2 Dissertations should not exceed 45,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage.

## **8. Oral Examination of the dissertation**

Refer to Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code.

## **9. Outcomes of the oral examination of the dissertation**

See Section 9.5 of the Regulations and Code for the possible outcomes of this examination.

## **10. Other professional requirements**

Successful trainees must also be deemed to have achieved competence in the areas of personal, academic and professional competence as specified in the BPS core curriculum and HPC Standards of Proficiency.

## **11. Exit awards**

A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in the research component of this degree (ie, fails the oral examination), or who is permitted to transfer programme, or who would like to leave before completing the DEdPsy may be recommended for the award of a taught Masters, a PG Diploma or a PG Certificate in Research and Professional Studies in Educational Psychology, subject to the following conditions and in accordance with the University Credit Framework:

- a) in the case of the Masters, candidates must obtain at least 180 credit points;
- b) in the case of the PG Diploma, candidates must obtain at least 120 credit points; and
- c) in the case of the PG Certificate, candidates must obtain at least 60 credit points.

## Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci) Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to these degrees, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes*, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html> will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

### 1. Qualification for admission

- 1.1 Candidature for the degree shall be subject to Section 4.1 of the Regulations and Code and the relevant admissions statement, which can be found at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/admissions-statements/>.
- 1.2 A candidate who has obtained a Master of Science degree, or such other degree or award as may be deemed equivalent, may apply for recognition of Accredited Prior Learning and may be granted remission of part of the taught component up to a maximum of 90 credit points (DSocSci) or 100 credit points (EdD) of the 540 credit points required for award of the degree. Such an exemption will **only** be granted **if the candidate successfully completes the doctoral programme**, ie submits a dissertation which is approved by the examiners appointed by the University.

### 2. Qualification for the degree

- 2.1 The qualification for the degree shall be:
  - a) pursuance of a curriculum of advanced study;
  - b) satisfactory performance in prescribed work;
  - c) submission of a dissertation, representing a contribution to knowledge; and
  - d) approval of such dissertation by examiners appointed by the University

### 3. Period of study

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.  
The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

For regulations concerning suspension of study or extension of the period of study, see Section 6 of the Regulations & Code.

### 4. Taught Stage

- 4.1 Students shall take taught units as prescribed in the programme structure, which can be found at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/unit-programme-catalogue/Welcome.jsa>.
- 4.2 Units will be marked on a 5 point scale, A – E, where the pass mark is C, or a 100 point scale where the pass mark is 50.
- 4.3 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. Additional criteria will be described in the unit description and School or Programme handbooks.
- 4.4 A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress. Resubmission of essays and coursework should normally be within 8-12 weeks of confirmation of the grade by the external examiner.



- 4.5 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award (if appropriate) unless there are validated extenuating circumstances. Refer the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for full details of extenuating circumstances processes.
- 4.6 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the recorded unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment.
- 4.7 Students are subject to the University Examination Regulations on plagiarism and cheating which are at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>.
- 4.8 The taught stage shall normally be completed within 2 years for full time students and 4 years for part-time students, subject to unit availability. Students who do not meet this time frame will be encouraged to exit with a lower award.

## **5. Progression to Dissertation**

- 5.1 In order to be permitted to progress to the dissertation, students must meet the following criteria:
- a) Pass all taught units as prescribed in the programme of study.
  - b) Gain at least 100 credit points in the taught component by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt.
  - c) Successfully complete any pre-requisites designated by the School as preparation for dissertation.
  - d) Submit a research proposal, which must be approved by the School. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of the study and ability to complete the dissertation within the time limit.
  - e) Obtain any ethical approval as required for the dissertation.
- 5.2 Once a student has progressed to the dissertation stage, they will be subject to progress monitoring arrangements as described in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code.

## **6. Submission of the dissertation**

- 6.1 The dissertation shall normally be submitted not earlier than one year and not later than four years after completion of the course work. The only permitted exceptions to this are covered by the rules on suspension of study or extension of the period of study in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code.
- 6.2 Submissions must comply with Section 9 of the Regulations and Code. Candidates should also be aware of the procedures for cases of plagiarism detected in a dissertation submitted for a research degree in Annex 8.
- 6.3 A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.
- 6.4 Dissertations should not exceed 45,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage.

**7. Oral Examination of the dissertation**

See Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code for details of this examination, and Section 9.5 for the possible outcomes of this examination.

**8. Exit awards**

8.1 Candidates on either the DSocSci or the EdD who fail to satisfy the examiners or who wish to leave before completing their award, may be recommended for the award of a taught Masters, PG Diploma or a PG Certificate subject to the following conditions and in accordance with the University Credit Framework:

- a) in the case of the Masters, candidates must obtain at least 180 credit points;
- b) in the case of the PG Diploma, candidates must obtain at least 120 credit points; and
- c) in the case of the PG Certificate, candidates must obtain at least 60 credit points.

The exit awards are:

- from the DSoc Sci, a Masters/PG Diploma/PG Cert in Social Sciences (Policy Studies);
- from the EdD, a Masters/PG Diploma/PG Cert in Research & Professional Studies.

In accordance with Section 1.2 of these Regulations for the DSocSci and EdD, an exemption for Accredited Prior Learning *is not permitted for exit awards*. Students must reach the minimum amount of credit points to be considered for the exit award by taking and passing modules as part of their current programme of study.

## Regulations for Masters Degrees by Research

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* (“the Regulations and Code”) will apply to the following research degrees: Master of Music, Master of Philosophy and Master of Science by Research, except where separate provision is made below.

### 1. Qualification for the degree: general statement

A candidate qualifies for the degree by:

- a) pursuing research for a period as specified in Section 4.3 of the Regulations and Code;
- b) submitting a dissertation embodying the results of this research;
- c) an oral examination and approval of the dissertation by examiners appointed by the University; and
- d) satisfying any formal requirements set by the faculty or a sponsor for a curriculum of advanced study, or for satisfactory performance in prescribed work, during the period of Masters Degree by Research registration. Such contractual requirements will be clearly stated before admission.

The criteria for award of a Masters degree by research are in Annex 7 and the assessment process is in Section 9 of the Regulations and Code.

There are specific regulations for the MPhil in Musical Composition and the Master of Music (MMus) in Section 5 of this annex below.

### 2. Submission of dissertation

Submission before the end of the minimum period is only possible with the approval of the relevant Graduate Education Director. Early submission will not affect tuition fee liability.

Except where an extension of the period of study has been granted, the dissertation must be submitted for examination by the end of the period of study. A candidate whose period of study has been extended must submit their dissertation no later than the end of the extended maximum period of study.

### 3. Length of dissertation

Dissertations should not exceed 30,000 words, excluding references, appendices and list of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate’s disadvantage.

Dissertations for the MPhil degree in the Faculty of Arts should not exceed 25,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. The MPhil in Musical Composition and the Master of Music have different requirements as set out in Section 5 of this annex below.

### 4. Transfer of registration

The Masters Degree by Research programme may include opportunities for candidates to transfer registration to a doctoral award, subject to satisfactory progress and the overall maximum study period for the doctorate.

### 5. Specific regulations for MPhil in Musical Composition and Master of Music (MMus)

Candidates for the degrees of MPhil in Musical Composition and MMus will submit a portfolio of compositions for a variety of forces. A proportion of the portfolio will have been performed, and recordings should be included with the submitted scores. Electronic and mixed media submissions of equivalent merit and extent are equally permissible. The commentary will provide an intellectually rigorous account of the composer’s creative landmarks and the nature of their

contribution to the field of contemporary composition. It will elucidate issues of importance to the candidate (e.g. constructional, cross-cultural, technological, sociological or other) and demonstrate awareness of the broader context within which the work is situated.

5.1 The degree of MPhil in Musical Composition requires:

- a) A portfolio of compositions (normally two or three) totalling c. 25 – 35 minutes of music.
- b) An analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling 4,000 - 5,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media).
- c) Approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

5.2 The degree of MMus requires:

- a) A portfolio of compositions (normally four or five) totalling c. 50 – 70 minutes of music.
- b) An analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling 8,000 - 10,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media).
- c) Approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

## Procedure for addressing unsatisfactory academic progress

### Introduction

This formal procedure must be followed when a research student's academic progress is still below the standard required after they have been given enhanced academic support (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code).

Research students whose academic performance is below the standard required should be advised at every stage of the options available to them, including voluntary withdrawal and requesting to change their registration to another degree.

Written records shall be kept of all informal and formal meetings at which a student's academic progress is considered and shall be copied to all participants and filed securely in the school. Students will be invited to sign off action plans so as to indicate that they have seen and understood the plans. Where feasible, students should be informed of progress decisions in person, otherwise via their University email address. Failure by the student to agree records, to acknowledge progress decisions or to sign off an action plan will not delay the operation of the procedure outlined here.

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, students may request access to any progress information held by the University during their studies e.g. progress reports and annual progress review reports.

*Unless the context indicates otherwise, references within this procedure to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a nominee. References to the supervisor shall be taken to mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. Where the student's main supervisor is the school Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director<sup>6</sup> or Faculty Graduate Education Director, a nominee will be appointed.*

### 1. Formal progress meeting

If the research student's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory after the period of enhanced academic support (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code), the supervisor will notify the student and the Graduate Education Director (GED) in writing, copied to the School's PGR Director, to initiate this procedure. Figure A3.1 summarises the procedure.

Upon notification, the GED will set up a formal progress meeting as soon as possible. The purpose of this meeting, chaired by the GED and attended by the student, the supervisor and the school PGR Director, is to consider the causes of the continuing unsatisfactory progress and any extenuating circumstances. At this meeting, both the student and the supervisor may raise, in writing or in person, any issues which they consider to be impeding the student's satisfactory progress. The student may bring a friend or supporter (this person may be from Just Ask: <http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support>) with them to the meeting, although that person will not normally take part in the discussion. Formal notes will be taken and copied to all parties. The GED will consider whether any action can be taken to resolve any issues raised. If so, the GED may direct that enhanced academic support is extended for a single further period, normally not exceeding two months (or four months for a part-time student), with appropriate measures in place to address the issues, for example in relation to supervision or additional support for the student. The purpose of this extended period is to allow the student additional time to complete Plan 1 (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code).

<sup>6</sup> References to the school PGR Director shall mean the holder of the equivalent office in schools or faculties where this title is not used.

If the GED concludes that there are no external causes for the unsatisfactory progress, the GED will direct that the student should move immediately to “at risk” under the next part of this procedure.

In either case, the GED must notify the student and the school of the outcome of the formal progress meeting in writing within one week of the meeting.

If the period of enhanced academic support has been extended and the supervisor and the school's PGR Director consider that progress is satisfactory by the end of the extended period they will advise the GED accordingly. The GED will then write to the student and the school to confirm this and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

If the period of enhanced academic support has been extended and the supervisor and the school's PGR Director consider that progress is still not satisfactory by the end of the extended period, they will advise the GED accordingly. The GED will then direct that the student should move immediately to “at risk” and will notify the student and the school in writing of this decision.

When notifying the student that “at risk” has been initiated, the GED should also inform the student of the potential consequences if a Registration Review Panel recommends termination or a change of registration.

## **2. "At risk"**

At this stage, the research student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory progress for several months and is at risk of being required to transfer to a different programme of study or, in the worst case, to withdraw.

If the GED has directed that “at risk” should be initiated, the supervisor, in consultation with the school PGR Director, must draw up an action plan (“Plan 2”), normally within two weeks of the student being notified they are “at risk”. Plan 2 must specify clearly what needs to be done, who is responsible for each action and the deadline for completion of the work (not exceeding three months or six months for a part-time student). Plan 2 should also include information about relevant support and training.

The school PGR Director will write to the student with a copy of Plan 2, setting out exactly what the student has to do by the specified deadline to recover from being “at risk”. The letter and the plan will be copied to the GED. The PGR Director will monitor progress against Plan 2 and will report to the GED at the end of the “at risk” period. On receipt of the school PGR Director's report, the GED will decide either to remove or to extend the “at risk” designation, or to refer the student to a Registration Review Panel.

Where the actions in Plan 2 are satisfactorily completed within the agreed timescale and the school PGR Director reports to the GED that they are satisfied with the progress of the student, the GED will inform the student in writing, copied to the supervisor, that the student is no longer “at risk” and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

Where the student has not completed Plan 2, but where the PGR Director reports that there are extenuating circumstances, the GED may choose to extend the period during which the student is deemed to be “at risk”, once only, by no more than two months (or four months for a part-time student). In this case, a further meeting of the student, the supervisor and the school PGR Director may then take place to agree the outstanding actions with appropriate timescales and to update Plan 2 if necessary. The GED will write to the student, copied to the supervisor and the school, with the updated plan. The school PGR Director will continue to monitor progress against the updated plan and will report again to the GED at the end of the extended period.

Where the actions are not satisfactorily completed within the agreed timescale, the school PGR Director reports continuing serious concerns about the student's progress and there are no extenuating circumstances, the GED will inform the student in writing, copied to the supervisor and the school, that the case is being referred to a Registration Review Panel.

The GED will refer the case to a Registration Review Panel by notifying the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) in writing.

### **3. Registration Review Panel**

#### **3.1. Composition of the Registration Review Panel**

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) will appoint a Registration Review Panel consisting of the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) as Chair and two senior academic members of staff (normally including at least one from the same school as the student) who must have had no previous involvement in the matter and who are independent of the student and the supervisor. The relevant Faculty Education Manager is responsible for the administration of the Registration Review Panel, and the Faculty Education Manager (or a nominee) will normally attend the panel.

The University Secretary's Office will provide a clerk to the Registration Review Panel, to make a formal record of the proceedings and to provide advice on procedural matters. Meetings of a Registration Review Panel may be recorded at the discretion of the Chair.

#### **3.2. Initial steps**

The school should provide the following documentation for the Panel:

- A covering paper which provides basic information on the case (name of school, student's name, supervisors' names, start date and expected end date, project title and details of any suspensions of study, etc.).
- All documentation relating to the application and appointment of the student, including any contract or agreement between the University and any funding body or sponsor.
- All minutes of meetings and letters associated with the student's progress, including annual progress report forms.
- A summary from the school of the main points of the case, to include main concerns, events and actions taken in the light of meetings held and evidence of any mitigating circumstances.

This documentation should be sent to the student and to the members of the Registration Review Panel at least 14 days before the hearing. The student should be invited to respond in writing and to submit any supporting documentation at least seven days before the hearing, for circulation to the members of the Registration Review Panel and the school. The main supervisor should be invited to provide a brief statement in writing, if desired.

#### **3.3. Remit of the Registration Review Panel**

The Registration Review Panel will hold a hearing at which both the student and representatives from the school, normally including the main supervisor, are entitled to be present. The student may be accompanied at the hearing by an adviser, friend or representative.

The Registration Review Panel will consider:

- whether or not the student is capable of attaining the required academic standard within the timescale prescribed by regulation for the award;
- the amount of work already completed to a satisfactory standard (especially where the student's registration is to be changed); and

- any extenuating circumstances.

### **3.4. Procedure of the Registration Review Panel**

The order of the hearing will be at the discretion of the Registration Review Panel, but will normally be conducted as follows:

- a. the representatives from the school will present their submissions;
- b. the student will present their response;
- c. the Panel may ask questions of the school and the student;
- d. the parties may ask questions of each other; and
- e. each party will be offered the opportunity in turn to sum up or make closing remarks, with the student being given the final word.

### **3.5. Decision of the Registration Review Panel**

The decision of the Panel will be that of the majority of its members.

The Registration Review Panel may recommend any of the following courses of action:

- that the student's registration be terminated;
- that the student's registration be changed to that for an alternative degree;
- that the student's registration remain unchanged, but that the student remains "at risk" for a further period; or
- that the student's registration remain unchanged and the student no longer remains "at risk".

The Panel may also make other recommendations on any matter it considers relevant.

The Registration Review Panel will report its recommendations within two weeks of the hearing to the Dean and the GED of the relevant faculty. The Dean will make the decision on the case on the basis of the Panel's recommendations within a week of receiving the recommendations and will inform the student, the supervisor, and the school, attaching a copy of the Panel's report. A copy of the decision will be kept in the student's file.

Appeals against a decision to terminate or change the registration of a postgraduate research student may be made under the Examination Regulations, Section 11, at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/exam-regulations.pdf>.

## **4. Termination of the academic progress procedure**

If a decision has been taken at any stage to bring the procedure to an end and there are subsequent concerns about the research student's academic progress and performance, the enhanced academic support process (in Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code) should be initiated rather than starting with any of the stages of this procedure, unless the Graduate Education Director decides otherwise.

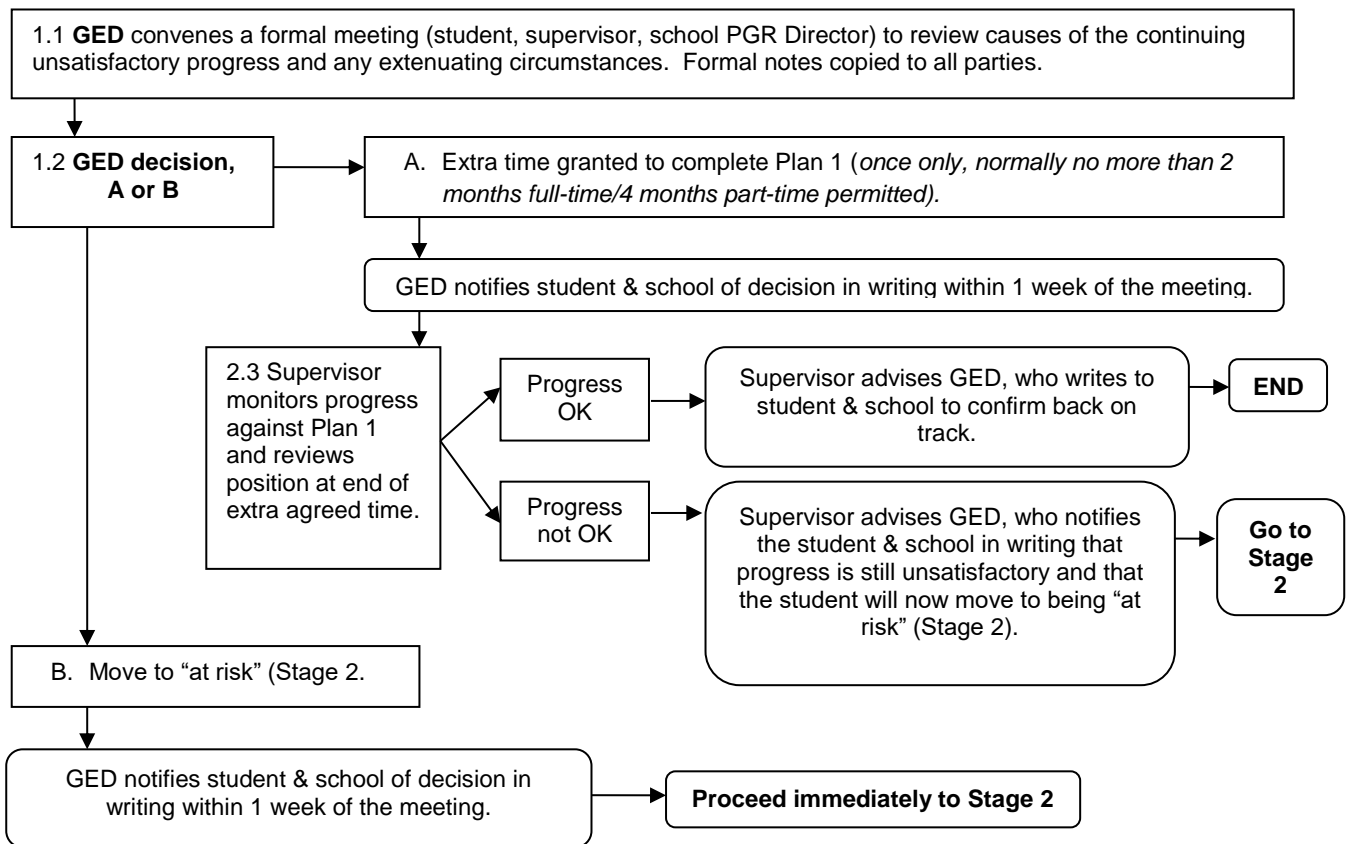


**Fig A3.1**  
**Flow chart of the procedure for addressing unsatisfactory progress**

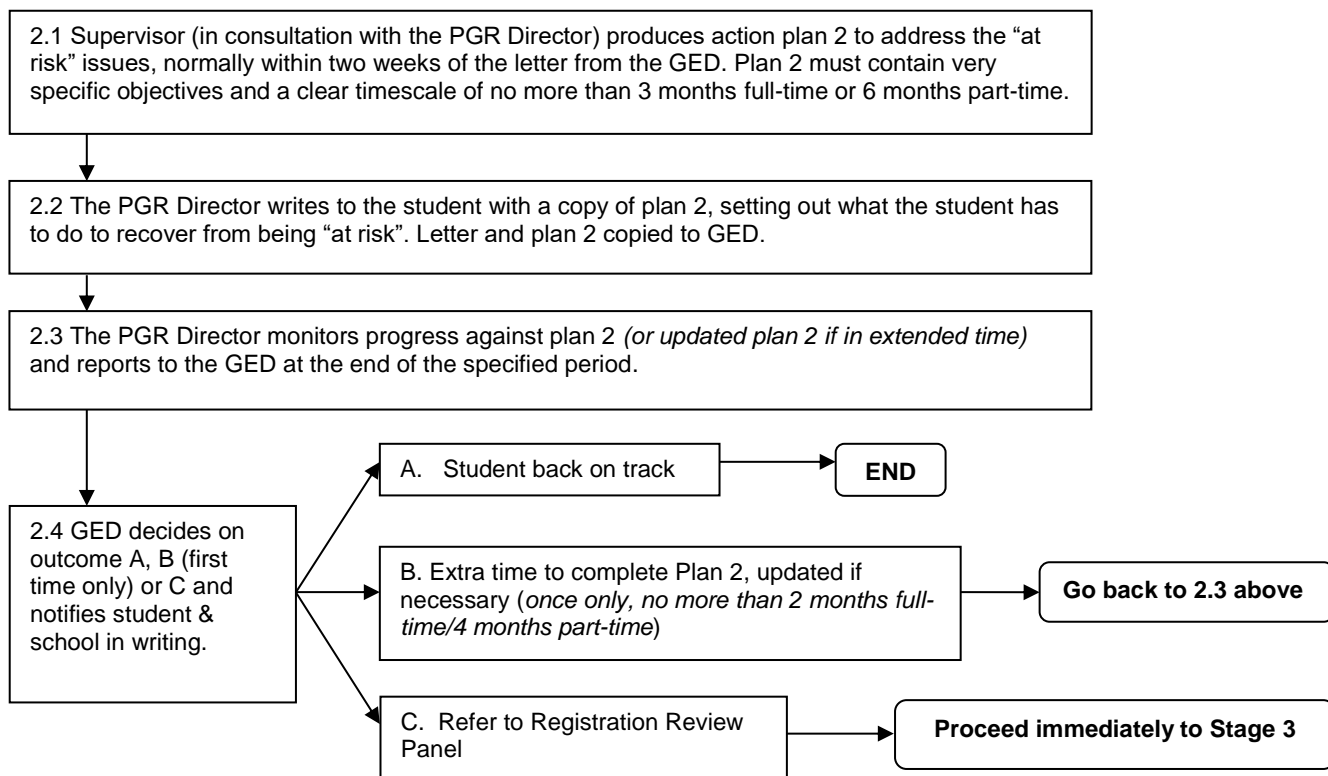
*Unless the context indicates otherwise, references to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a person nominated to act on their behalf. References to the supervisor shall mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. If the student's main supervisor is also the school PGR Director (or equivalent) or the faculty Graduate Education Director (GED), somebody else will be appointed to take on the role of PGR Director or GED.*

**The numbering of steps in this flowchart does not necessarily correspond to the numbering of sections in the text in the regulations.**

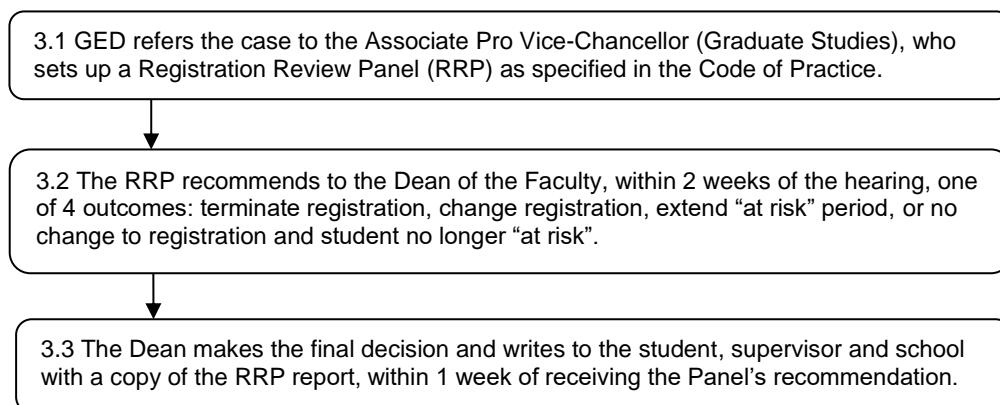
**Stage 1 - Formal Progress Review Meeting**



## Stage 2– At risk



## Stage 3 – Registration Review Panel



## Notes

1. It is the responsibility of students to inform their sponsor that this procedure has been initiated and to update the sponsor on progress thereafter.
2. Where academic reports to sponsors are requested, supervisors must provide honest assessments of progress.

## **Format of the dissertation for research degrees and of the final copies of the dissertation or published work and commentary**

Supervisors should advise their research students on the norms and practices of their discipline in terms of the dissertation.

The hard copies of the dissertation required for the examination process should be in temporary bindings. The final copy of the dissertation should be electronically deposited in pdf format or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium as agreed with supervisors.

### **Format of dissertations for research degrees**

#### *Preliminary pages*

The five preliminary pages must be the Title Page, Abstract, Dedication and Acknowledgements, Author's Declaration and Table of Contents. These should be single-sided.

#### *Title page*

At the top of the title page, within the margins, the dissertation should give the title and, if necessary, sub-title and volume number. If the dissertation is in a language other than English, the title must be given in that language and in English. The full name of the author should be in the centre of the page. At the bottom centre should be the words "A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of ... in the Faculty of ..." with the name of the school and month and year of submission. The word count of the dissertation (text only) should be entered at the bottom right-hand side of the page.

#### *Abstract*

Each copy must include an abstract or summary of the dissertation in not more than 300 words, on one side of A4, which should be single-spaced in a font size in the range 10 to 12. If the dissertation is in a language other than English, an abstract in that language and an abstract in English must be included.

#### *Author's declaration*

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE:.....

#### *Table of contents, list of tables and illustrative material*

The table of contents must list, with page numbers, all chapters, sections and subsections, the list of references, bibliography, list of abbreviations and appendices. The list of tables and illustrations should follow the table of contents, listing with page numbers the tables, photographs, diagrams, etc., in the order in which they appear in the text.

#### *Paper*

The hard copies of the dissertation required for the examination process must be printed on A4 white paper. Paper up to A3 may be used for maps, plans, diagrams and illustrative material. Pages (apart from the preliminary pages) should normally be double-sided.

*Page numbering*

The pages should be numbered consecutively at the bottom centre of the page.

*Text*

Text should be in double or 1.5 line spacing, and font size should be chosen to ensure clarity and legibility for the main text and for any quotations and footnotes.

*Digital recording media, photocopies, photographs and research data*

Appended digital recording media should be in a standard format and there should be a declaration in the dissertation of the programs used and the size of the files. Good quality photocopies and photographs may be used for the examination copies.

For the final copy of the dissertation, digital media such as Excel files should be combined into a single pdf file with the dissertation text. Students should discuss any accompanying research data that may be submitted with the dissertation with their supervisors. Guidance is also available from Library Services: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/staff/researchers/theses/>.

*Temporary binding*

The initial copies of the dissertation required for the examination process should be presented in a secure, temporary binding, with a glued or spiral spine and not in a ring or spring binder.

## ANNEX 5

### Guidelines on the Conduct of Remote Oral Examinations by Video Link for Research Degrees

1. Normally, the oral examination for a research degree will take place at the University of Bristol. An oral examination may only be conducted remotely by video link in exceptional circumstances, when the candidate or an external examiner is at a distance from the University (normally outside the UK) and is unable, for reasons that should be detailed, to travel to Bristol at the appropriate time. It is only permissible for one participant of the oral examination to be remote.
2. **In all cases, the decision to allow an oral examination to be conducted remotely by video link rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) or nominee who must see and approve the detailed arrangements for running the examination.** Any request to conduct an oral examination remotely by video link must have the written agreement of the candidate, all of the examiners and the Head of School, and the approval of the relevant Graduate Education Director before it is submitted as an attachment to the 'Appointment of Research Degree Examiners Form' to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (or on a separate form if, for an unforeseen reason, it is required after the appointment of the examiners has already been approved). The request will then be forwarded to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) or nominee for approval.
3. All parties should have the benefits and difficulties of the technology to be used explained prior to requesting a remote oral examination. No pressure should be put on any party to assent to the oral examination being carried out remotely. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged compared with the standard oral examination. A remote examination should not be used in any cases where the supervisor or the school PGR Director (or equivalent) feels that a candidate may be placed at a disadvantage.
4. As with other examination costs associated with research degrees, any expenses of remote oral examinations will normally be met by the school. However, if the remote link is to be used because of the candidate's inability to return to Bristol, the school will normally require the candidate to contribute all or part of any additional costs. These costs may be payable in advance of the examination taking place.
5. If exceptional circumstances make it necessary for the examination to be conducted remotely the following points should be observed:
  - The technology used must accommodate the anticipated needs of the examination.
  - The quality of the equipment to be used (and particularly that to be used by the remote party) must be taken into account when agreeing and arranging the remote examination.
  - Oral examinations by video link may take place over a secure link supported by the central or local IT team as an alternative to the central facilities, although the latter is recommended as more secure.
  - The video link facilities should be available for sufficient time for the examination to take place. If there is doubt about the length of time required, every effort should be

made to ensure that possible overrunning can be accommodated. It is suggested that the facilities are booked for at least one hour beyond the anticipated length of the examination.

- Time should be allowed in advance of the examination for all parties to undertake a short training session and become familiar with the use of the technology. It is recommended that a trial run is undertaken prior to the oral examination to ensure that the technology used meets requirements.
  - If the examiners are at different sites, they must take account of their need to share their preliminary reports and consult privately with each other on the conduct of the examination.
  - If the candidate is the remote party, they must be accompanied by an approved independent person, such as a member of academic staff at another academic institution. Any materials brought by the candidate into the room should be identified at the start of the examination.
6. Oral examinations carried out by remote link will not be routinely recorded.
7. Appeals will be conducted under the University's standard procedures. Student may wish to contact Just Ask, a confidential service provided by Bristol Students' Union, for advice on the appeals process (<http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support>).

## ANNEX 6

### Guidance for research degree examiners on what constitutes minor errors in a dissertation

The following are allowable as minor errors under examiners' recommendation B (*award subject to the correction of minor errors*):

- Typographical errors; but if the errors, though trivial individually, are so numerous as to suggest carelessness on the part of the candidate, or so intrusive as to distract the reader's attention from the argument of the dissertation, the examiners would be fully justified in making recommendation C (*award subject to correction of errors or omissions of substance*) instead of B;
- Minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to, the text, references or diagrams;
- Other, more extensive, corrections **as long as they do not require major re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the dissertation.**

It should be possible to list the individual corrections required, and, once carried out, for the internal examiner to verify easily that the corrections have been made. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that minor corrections are approved by an external examiner or by a University of Bristol academic nominated by the school.

The time needed to make minor corrections must be **no more than 28 days** after notification from the Research Degrees Examination Board at which the examiners' reports were considered (RDEB meeting dates are available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/research-exam-board/>).

The University requires the internal examiner to confirm to the Research Degrees Examination Board, via the Academic Quality and Policy Office, that the corrections have been made before the degree certificate can be issued. Degree certificates will not be issued unless the Academic Quality and Policy Office has received this confirmation. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must ensure that minor corrections are approved by an external examiner or by a University of Bristol academic nominated by the School

If the corrections required are more substantial than those indicated here, the examiners should tick one of the alternative recommendations (e.g. C, degree to be awarded once errors or omissions of substance have been corrected to the satisfaction of the examiner). Where there are numerous instances of errors that are individually minor but when taken together are deemed by the examiners to form a significant undertaking for the candidate to correct, a recommendation of errors of substance may be made.

## **Criteria for award of research degrees**

Using the descriptors for qualifications at doctoral and Masters level developed by the QAA as part of the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the University has developed the following explicit, yet generic criteria for the award of research doctoral and Masters degrees:

### **For all research degrees**

- 1) The dissertation should:
  - (a) embody the results of research, carried out by the candidate, which may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student in the period of study specified in the Regulations for the degree;
  - (b) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations;
  - (c) make clear the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the areas which are claimed as original;
  - (d) show the exercise of critical judgment with regard to both the candidate's own work and that of other scholars in the field; and
  - (e) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument.
  
- 2) The dissertation and the oral examination together must demonstrate that the candidate has:
  - (a) an adequate knowledge and understanding of the discipline and the context within which the research is grounded and of the literature relevant to the research; and
  - (b) the ability to put forward arguments in an appropriate form, both orally and in writing.

### **Masters degrees by research**

- 3) In addition to the requirements in 1) and 2), the dissertation submitted for a Masters degree by research should represent a contribution to knowledge.

### **Doctoral degrees**

- 4) The dissertation submitted for a doctoral degree should, in addition to the requirements in 1) and 2), represent a significant and original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication or dissemination in whole, or in part, in a form appropriate to the discipline.
  
- 5) For candidature by published work, the work submitted should in addition:
  - (a) relate in a coherent way to the field of knowledge and represent a significant and original contribution; and
  - (b) be accompanied by a substantial commentary in the candidate's own words linking the published work and outlining its coherence and significance, and making clear the extent of the contribution of others to the work submitted.



6) For candidature by dissertation or by published work, the work submitted and the oral examination together must, in addition to the requirements in 4), demonstrate that the candidate has the capacity to pursue independently original research based on a good understanding of the relevant techniques and concepts.

7) Definitions:

(a) *Dissertation*

A dissertation may, with the approval of the faculty, take the form of work relevant to the professional practice in which the degree is embedded, such as portfolios of work and project reports. In all cases these shall be accompanied by a commentary providing a critical evaluation of the candidate's work in relation to the academic and research context. The commentary will generally serve as the implicit agenda for the oral examination. The term "dissertation" should be interpreted accordingly.

(b) *Research degrees including creative work*

Where a candidate submits work which includes images, artefacts or other creative work, the dissertation comprises the creative element and a written commentary together. The creative work should be clearly presented, in an appropriate form and accompanied by a commentary that provides a discursive treatment of the creative work and sets it in its research context. The commentary is normally not less than 30,000 words and generally serves as the implicit agenda for the oral examination. The final submission should include some permanent record of the creative element, combined in an appropriate way with the commentary.

(c) *Originality*

Originality, in the context of the research described in a dissertation or work submitted, means making a contribution to learning, for example through the discovery of new knowledge or the application of existing knowledge in new situations, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory or the revision of previously held views, or the development of new research methods.

(d) *Professional doctorates*

Professional doctorates are research degrees based on research embedded in professional practice. They may include taught components at level M/7 or above, which are assessed separately from the dissertation. Further information is available in the regulations for the specific degree (Annexes 1 and 2) and in the programme specifications for the degree available on the University website at:

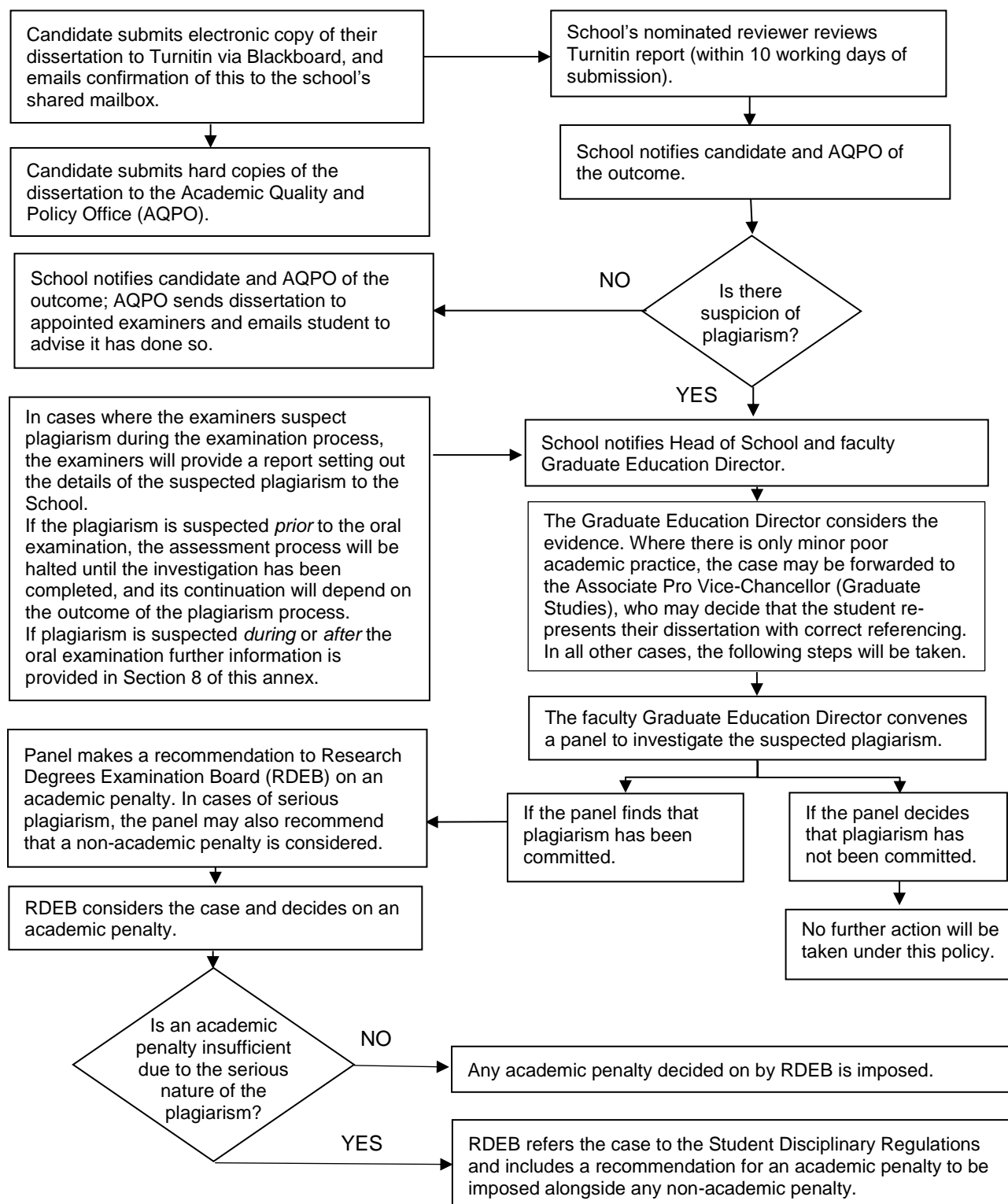
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/unit-programme-catalogue/AboutProgrammes.jsa>.

## ANNEX 8

### Checking for plagiarism in a research degree dissertation and dealing with plagiarism if detected.

- As set out in Section 9.2.4 of this Code, all dissertations submitted for a research degree are subject to checking for plagiarism. The procedure to be followed is set out in fig 8.1 and the subsequent text.

Fig 8.1



## **2. Submission to Turnitin**

Details of how to submit dissertations to Turnitin will be provided in faculty guidelines which will be made available to students at least twelve months before their final submission date.

## **3. No plagiarism**

If the check confirms no plagiarism, the dissertation will be sent for examination.

## **4. Suspected plagiarism**

If the check reveals suspected plagiarism, then

- 4.1. The School will notify the Head of School and the faculty Graduate Education Director as soon as possible, in writing, with the relevant evidence.
- 4.2. The Graduate Education Director (or nominee) will consider the evidence and, where there is only minor poor academic practice, may forward the case to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) who may decide that the student re-presents their dissertation for comparison checking with correct referencing, with any necessary support provided by the student's supervisors. Where this is agreed by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies), the poor academic practice will be documented on the student's record.
- 4.3. In all other cases, the faculty Graduate Education Director will convene a faculty panel to investigate the suspected plagiarism, and the panel will interview the student. The panel will consist of at least three academic members of staff without previous direct involvement with the student, including:
  - i. A member of the student's home school, and
  - ii. A member of a school other than the student's.
- 4.4. The faculty Graduate Education Director must appoint a nominee with appropriate experience to chair the panel. To maintain impartiality, the faculty Graduate Education Director must not chair or be a member of the panel.
- 4.5. The Faculty Education Manager (or nominee) will attend to provide advice on regulations.
- 4.6. The student may be accompanied at the interview by an adviser, friend or other representative. This could be from the Just Ask team at Bristol SU (<https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-and-support>).
- 4.7. Notes will be taken of the interview, which will subsequently be circulated all parties.
- 4.8. Information and evidence circulated to the panel will also be made available to the student in advance of the panel interview.

4.9. The purpose of the interview shall be to determine whether or not plagiarism has occurred and to allow the student to make representations and to present mitigating factors.

## **5. Preliminary decisions**

The panel will first decide whether the student has committed the offence of plagiarism. If the panel decides that the offence has not been proved, no further action will be taken under this procedure.

Where the panel finds that the offence of plagiarism has been committed, the panel will also determine the seriousness of the plagiarism, taking the following factors into account:

- i. Whether it is the first or subsequent offence; and
- ii. The extent and significance of plagiarism in the dissertation.

## **6. Referral to the Research Degrees Examination Board**

The panel will write to the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) to recommend a penalty taken from the list below. In cases of serious plagiarism, the panel may also recommend that a non-academic penalty be considered. The report to RDEB will set out the finding of plagiarism, a brief summary of the evidence considered, the factors that the panel took into account in reaching its conclusion and the penalty it recommends, together with any mitigation put forward by the student. A copy of the recommendation will be sent to the student.

The final decision as to the penalty will be reached at a full meeting of RDEB. After consideration of the report from the plagiarism panel, RDEB may:

- i. impose no penalty beyond recording the case on the student's school file for future reference, either permanently or for a specified period;
- ii. require re-presentation of all or part of the dissertation;
- iii. exclude the student from the award of the degree, which may be either permanent or for a stated period, and may be absolute or subject to compliance with stipulated requirements; or
- iv. award a lower qualification than that for which the student was registered where regulations permit this.

The penalty will depend on the seriousness of the offence. However, any mitigating factors reported by the plagiarism panel will be taken into account when determining the penalty.

If the penalty imposed is re-presentation of all or part of the dissertation the student will be given a deadline for the re-presentation, not exceeding four weeks from the date of notification by RDEB of the decision.

Details of the allegation and penalty will be recorded in the RDEB minutes, with a copy on the student's school file. The Academic Quality and Policy Office will keep a central record of such plagiarism cases and report them to Education Committee annually. Cases of plagiarism in a dissertation submitted for a research degree should normally be mentioned in student references, but only if a record of plagiarism remains on the school file at the time when the reference is requested.

Where RDEB considers that an academic penalty is insufficient due to the serious nature of the plagiarism, it may instead refer the case to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations as set out in Section 7 below. RDEB will not impose any penalty itself in those cases but may make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor for a specified academic penalty to be imposed alongside any non-academic penalties made under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

#### **7. Procedure in the event of serious plagiarism where an academic penalty is considered insufficient**

If RDEB considers that the plagiarism is so serious that a penalty other than an academic penalty should be considered, the matter should be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>. RDEB will make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor, through the University Secretary, to this effect, including a recommendation for a specified academic penalty to be imposed alongside any non-academic penalty.

Where an offence of plagiarism is dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) will make the final decision on penalties and may impose any penalty or penalties available under the Student Disciplinary Regulations and the specified academic penalty recommended by RDEB.

#### **8. Where plagiarism is suspected during or after the assessment process**

In cases where examiners suspect plagiarism during the assessment process, the procedure set out in Sections 4 to 7 above will be followed. The examiners will provide a report setting out the details of the suspected plagiarism to the School as evidence to inform the deliberations of the panel convened under Section 4 above.

If examiners have any suspicions of plagiarism *prior* to the oral examination then the assessment process will be halted so that the plagiarism procedure may be completed. Continuation of the assessment process will depend upon the outcome of the plagiarism procedure.

If an examiner suspects plagiarism *during* the oral examination, they may ask questions of the candidate to inform their view more fully. If the concerns remain, the oral examination will be stopped. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair if present) will inform the candidate that the oral examination has been stopped due to the suspected plagiarism that has arisen. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair if present) will then notify the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The examiners will provide a report setting out the details of the suspected plagiarism so that it may be investigated through

the plagiarism procedure. Continuation of the examination process, including a rescheduled oral examination, will depend upon the outcome of the plagiarism procedure.

If plagiarism is suspected *after* the oral examination, the procedure set out in Sections 4 to 7 will be followed to the extent practicable.

Where an award has been made and the student is no longer registered at the University, any allegations of plagiarism should be referred in the first instance to RDEB for investigation. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as RDEB considers reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances with the aim of ensuring a fair process. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), who may consult with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) before reaching a decision on the case. If the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) considers that the award has been improperly obtained, the case will be referred to Senate for consideration of whether or not to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the award be withdrawn under Ordinance 16.

## **Policy for research degrees by distance learning**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy defines the requirements for research degrees that are conducted through distance learning. It should be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, which sets out the University's requirements in relation to all research students. The additional considerations that must be taken into account for distance learning are presented below.

### **2. Definition of Research Degrees by Distance Learning**

- 2.1. Students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning undertake the majority of their research away from the University either in the UK or overseas. This is combined with compulsory visits to the University and appropriate remote support.
- 2.2. Research Degrees by Distance Learning will be appropriate for students where relevant resources are largely available locally or online.
- 2.3. The significant factors in determining whether a Research Degree by Distance Learning is appropriate are a) where the primary means of supervision is remote and b) where the student's research project is not dependent on the University's on-site facilities.
- 2.4. Research students who are away from the University to undertake fieldwork, etc. are not classified as studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning. There are however elements of this policy that may act as good practice for those students, such as how to engage with the University when not on campus.
- 2.5. A Research Degree by Distance Learning is not a split-site PhD, where the student spends time at both the University and another institution within a fully collaborative structure. For split-site PhDs a written agreement is always required with the other organisation, while for distance learning the primary relationship is normally with the research student.
- 2.6. If however a student who wishes to study by distance learning has a research project that is dependent on an employer or another organisation (for example, a dependency on facilities or data), a written agreement must be put in place (see Section 3).
- 2.7. The expectations set out in this policy may also be relevant to educational partnerships developed through other routes, where the location of study is deemed to be distance learning.

### 3. Distance learning and partnership agreements

- 3.1. A partnership agreement is required for a Research Degree by Distance Learning if the student's project is **dependent** on an employer or another organisation (see the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements* <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/>). The agreement may, for example, be limited to covering the dependent use of facilities or data and to any intellectual property issues, depending on the nature of the project and on the University's relationship with the other organisation.
- 3.2. The approval process, which includes a due diligence consideration and an enhanced approval route where a partnership is required (see Section 6), will be completed before any written agreement is set up.
- 3.3. If the student is based in, or has access to, an environment that is conducive to research (such as through a research or educational organisation) but is not dependent on it, a letter must be obtained from the organisation to confirm its general support. A partnership agreement is not required in these cases.

### 4. Principles

- 4.1. A Research Degree by Distance Learning offers a high level of flexibility for the student, but it requires the same commitment for serious study as for any research degree. It is therefore vital that the student is able to make the commitment and that the University is in position to offer the necessary support.
- 4.2. The student must receive clear and realistic advice on expectations in relation to distance learning, including on the level of autonomy placed upon them, on the requirement to attend the University at certain times, and on the extent of support that will be available to them.
- 4.3. Students studying through distance learning are required to ensure that they have access to an appropriate local research environment so that they can complete their research project. There must also be access to the relevant research environment at the University through a combination of remote links and scheduled visits.
- 4.4. Schools must decide whether they wish to offer Research Degrees by Distance Learning as an option for their research degree programmes. There may however be cases where it will not be feasible, particularly in lab-based disciplines where appropriate local provision is not available or where regular access to University on-site facilities is required. The approval and admissions process (see Section 6) requires a full consideration of whether appropriate access to resources and support is in place.
- 4.5. Research Degrees by Distance Learning may be undertaken on either a full-time or part-time basis, and are subject to the normal minimum and maximum periods of study set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.



- 4.6. Studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning is not permissible if it contravenes the regulations of any funders.
- 4.7. Successful students will receive an award from the University of Bristol. The formal degree title for Research Degrees by Distance Learning is the same as for any other location of study as the criteria for the award are identical.

## **5. International students**

- 5.1. Research Degrees by Distance Learning are open to international students, and their visits to the University must be in compliance with the requirements of the UK Government at the time of travel. These requirements may change over the course of the programme.
- 5.2. International students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning must follow the current requirements to secure Short Term Study Visas for visits to the University. More information is available on the International Student Visa and Compliance webpages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/>).
- 5.3. The University cannot guarantee that an international student studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning will be able to secure a Short Term Study Visa for each visit. International students will be provided with appropriate documentation from the University to support applications for Short Term Study Visas, but the responsibility to meet visa requirements remains with the student. See Section 12 for more information on visits and visas.

## **6. Approval and admissions**

- 6.1. Schools must decide whether they wish to include a distance learning option for their research degrees in the prospectus and in any promotional materials. Where distance learning is included, an acknowledgement of the requirement for Short Term Study Visas for international students and a link to the International Student Visa and Compliance webpages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/>) must be included (see Section 5).
- 6.2. For schools that have decided to allow Research Degrees by Distance Learning, an individual approval process is followed for each applicant. It is recommended that supervisors and applicants start the process as early as possible as there are a number of factors to consider.
- 6.3. Applicants must meet the general admission requirements for research degree programmes. Additional information will also be collected through the application process to ensure that both the prospective student and the school are in a position to meet the extra commitments required for distance learning.

- 6.4. Prospective students who wish to study by distance learning must demonstrate the following:
- An ability to undertake research independently as shown, for example, by previous distance learning experience, the completion of independent research projects, presentations at conferences, and professional or academic publications.
  - Evidence that the student's home location is suitable for undertaking the research and that there is access to appropriate research materials and resources.
  - Access to appropriate technological equipment and the internet to allow remote contact.
- 6.5. Prospective students must articulate their motivation for requesting to study by distance learning.
- 6.6. Prospective students are required to confirm that they can meet the financial demands of studying by distance learning, which covers tuition fees and additional costs (see Section 8).
- 6.7. If the prospective student's research is dependent on an employer or another organisation (see Section 3), a letter from the employer/organisation confirming its support for the application and its understanding that a written agreement will be required must be included as part of the application process. The school must also ensure that a due diligence check is undertaken on the organisation. The process to develop the written agreement will be initiated once approval has been given.
- 6.8. If the prospective student is employed by, or has a relationship with, an organisation and will benefit from its research environment but where there will be no dependency, a letter from the employer/organisation confirming its general support must be included as part of the application process.
- 6.9. As part of the application process, the school must address the resource requirements for supporting the distance learning needs of the student. Appropriate supervision (see Section 9), suitable technology for remote contact and support including access to relevant University systems, and links to the necessary research environment must all be in place. The University's commitment, including in terms of supervisory support and the resources available to the student, must be fully articulated.
- 6.10. The details of compulsory visits to the University (see Section 12) and for annual progress reviews (see Section 16) must be agreed as part of the application process. For international students, guidance must be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team on visa requirements for visits.
- 6.11. The application must be agreed at school, faculty and University levels:
- a) Where the prospective student's research is *not* dependent on the an employer or another organisation, the following approval route is followed:

- Main supervisor;
  - School PGR Director (or equivalent) or Head of School;
  - Graduate Education Director; and
  - Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies)
- b) If the prospective student's research is dependent on using the facilities of another organisation (see Section 3), and a written agreement will therefore have to be developed, an enhanced approval route is in place to match the authorisation required for all new educational collaborative arrangements:
- Main supervisor;
  - School PGR Director (or equivalent) or Head of School;
  - Graduate Education Director;
  - Faculty Financial Controller;
  - Dean of Faculty; and
  - Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies)
- c) All authorised applications will be reported to Education Committee during the pilot period of this policy.

6.12. An offer of a place must not be made to the student until formal approval has been authorised. The offer letter will set out the particular expectations placed on the student, including on compulsory visits and on any visa requirements.

## **7. Changes in location of study**

- 7.1. An application to study a Research Degree by Distance Learning is normally only made during the admissions process. In exceptional circumstances, current campus-based research students may be allowed to transfer their location of study to distance learning. In those cases, the additional information required as part of the application process (see Section 6) must still be completed and approved before the transfer will be allowed.
- 7.2. For international students who in exceptional circumstances wish to change from studying at the University with a Tier 4 Student Visa to studying by distance learning, advice must be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team. A move to distance learning will require the withdrawal of the University's sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 Visa, with the student relying on securing Short Term Study Visas for all further visits to the University.
- 7.3. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning may make a request to change to campus-based study. Possible reasons for such a request may include changes to the student's personal or employment circumstances. Approval for a change in the location of study must be sought from the faculty Graduate Education Director, who will make a decision based on the feasibility of the request for both the student (in terms of practical arrangements and any visa requirements) and for the school (in terms of available resources). There is no automatic right to change from distance learning to campus-based study.

- 7.4. For international students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning who wish to change to another location of study, advice must be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team. A move to study at the University requires a Tier 4 Student Visa, which is sponsored by the University and is secured in the student's country of residence.

## **8. Student fees and costs**

- 8.1. The tuition fees for students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning are the same as for campus-based study. Students also have to arrange and cover the costs for their visits to the University, including travel, accommodation and any visa requirements. These additional costs do not form part of the tuition fees and this must be made clear in public information and in communications with prospective students (see Section 15).

## **9. Supervision**

- 9.1. In all cases, the supervisory requirements set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* must be met.
- 9.2. The significant supervisory characteristic for students studying by distance learning will be that they engage with their supervisors mostly through electronic means. There should also be a clear understanding between the student and the supervisors on what constitutes reasonable access if advice is required outside of pre-arranged supervisory meetings.
- 9.3. Supervisors for distance learning research students must have an awareness of this particular form of supervision and must have completed a University of Bristol supervisor development session within the last two years.
- 9.4. The visits to the University (see Section 12) provide important opportunities for face-to-face supervision.
- 9.5. Supervisors must be aware of their responsibilities in relation to students studying by distance learning. The time and commitment required for distance learning supervision will be no less, and may be more, than for supervision of students based at the University.
- 9.6. Supervisors must keep a full record of all correspondence with the student, including around progress, and supervisory meetings must be fully documented. Students must keep their own record of their engagement with their supervisors.
- 9.7. Where a written agreement is in place, a formal local contact or co-supervisor may be identified to assist in supporting the student. For local co-supervisors, this may be as an honorary member of staff.
- 9.8. Where the student is based in an organisation that supports an environment that is conducive to research, an informal local support contact may be available to the

student. In these cases, arrangements should be made between the supervisors and the local support contact. It must be made clear that any arrangements are of an informal nature and the local contact is not a member of the supervisory team.

## **10. Student support**

10.1. The University has a duty of care for the welfare of its students. The school and the main supervisor must ensure that pastoral considerations are included as part of the supervisory process. It is acknowledged that access to the University's on-site Student Services may be limited for students not based on campus.

## **11. Student representation**

11.1. Students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning are included in the University student representation system for research students.

11.2. Schools must ensure that students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning have opportunities to engage with Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs). It may not be possible for distance learning research students to attend SSLCs in person.

## **12. Attendance at the University**

12.1. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning are required to visit the University at regular intervals during their normal period of study. The minimum requirement is for a two-week visit each academic year, plus a further visit for the oral examination. The requirement is the same for both full-time and part-time students. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the student to attend the University for further visits and/or for a longer period. Visits must however remain within a distance learning structure and must not impact negatively on any visa requirements. For international students, advice must be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team in these cases.

12.2. For international students, the school must:

- a) Ensure there is a process in place to ensure that international students present their Short Term Study Visas for scanning to the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance team upon arrival for each visit to the UK, prior to any engagement with their studies.
- b) Ensure that students relying on Short Term Study Visas are referred to the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance webpages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/>) prior to each visit to the University so that they are aware of current visa rules.
- c) Provide a formal visit invitation letter to the student prior to each visit to assist in the visa application process. In some cases, the Faculty is responsible for providing the invitation letter.

12.3. The first visit to the University allows for a formal induction, coupled with intensive research skills training and individually tailored project development with the

supervisory team. Opportunities to engage in research community activities should form part of the visit. Subsequent visits should continue to address the developmental and engagement needs of the student.

12.4. The school is responsible for ensuring that students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning have access to an appropriate place to work and suitable equipment during visits.

12.5. Any variation from the visit schedule as agreed as part of the approval process (see Section 6) must be agreed by the main supervisor and the school's PGR Director (or equivalent). For international students, advice must be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance team on whether there are any implications related to visa requirements.

12.6. An exemption for non-attendance at a scheduled visit, where it has not been possible to rearrange the visit, will only be granted in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the faculty Graduate Education Director.

12.7. The University cannot guarantee that international students will be able to secure a visa for each visit (see Section 5). In the event that students are unable to secure a visa, they may have to apply for suspensions of study until their situation is resolved.

### **13. Training and resources**

13.1. A student studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning must have access to appropriate research skills training, which is normally required or provided by schools and faculties, and to the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme. The training may be provided as part of student's visits to the University and online resources may be available in some areas. Some University-based training may only be available at certain times of the year, which may require a student's visit to be rearranged.

13.2. As for all research degrees, supervisors and students must regularly review training needs. For distance learning research students, an initial consideration of training needs must take place before the first visit. As there are only limited online resources, particular consideration must be given to where training has to be undertaken during student visits. In addition, supervisors and students should explore opportunities to utilise new skills training either during visits or at the student's home location.

### **14. Research community**

14.1. Participating in the research community, including through opportunities to network with their peers, is an important aspect of study for all research students, including those studying by distance learning. Engaging with the research community forms part of the student's visits to the University, together with online provision and connections to the school's research community.

## 15. Provision of information

- 15.1. Public information and communications to prospective students must provide clear and realistic guidance on the expectations for distance learning, including on how the student will engage with the University and details on tuition fees and additional costs (see Section 8).
- 15.2. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning will have access to online information, containing dedicated guidance for distance learning, access to e-library resources and links to training opportunities.

## 16. Progress and review arrangements

- 16.1. The annual progress review is equivalent to the process followed for research students based at the University. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning may be required to be in attendance at the University for progress reviews (as part of a visit), or the process may be conducted through electronic means. How annual progress reviews will be organised will be set as part of the application process (see Section 6), and any variation from the agreed approach must be approved by the faculty Graduate Education Director.

## 17. Assessment

- 17.1. The assessment process, including the submission of the dissertation and the subsequent oral examination, is set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.
- 17.2. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning should be informed of the date of the oral examination in good time so that they are able to make appropriate travel, accommodation and any visa arrangements. For international students, this should normally be 12 – 16 weeks in advance.
- 17.3. It should be noted that the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* does allow for oral examinations to be held elsewhere or remotely in exceptional circumstances. Studying by distance learning is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

## 18. Reviewing provision

- 18.1. Schools will monitor the progress and outcomes for students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning.
- 18.2. The University will maintain an oversight of distance learning for research students and will regularly undertake reviews of provision in this area.
- 18.3. Any written agreements put in place to cover multiple distance learning research students may be subject to the periodic review process (see the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements*).

## ANNEX 10

# The personal and professional development policy for research students

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the University approach for the personal and professional development of research students. It should be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Codes for Research Degree Programmes*, which specifies the University requirements in relation to all research students, including on the development of research and other skills.

## 2. Definition of personal and professional development

2.1. Personal and professional development for research students relates to the acquisition and application of skills and competencies required for researchers to realise their potential and to be successful. The approach of the University of Bristol builds on the *Vitae Researcher Development Framework*, which is a national reference point in the planning, promotion and support of personal and professional development for researchers in higher education.<sup>7</sup>

2.2. The external context for personal and professional development includes the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*,<sup>8</sup> the *QAA Quality Code – Chapter B11: Research Degrees*<sup>9</sup> and the Roberts' Review *SET for Success*.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the *RCUK Training Grant Guide*<sup>11</sup> specifies that appropriate researcher development training is in place.

2.3. All training and other activities that contribute to the personal and professional development of research students are covered by this policy. This relates to the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme<sup>12</sup> and the training provided by faculties and schools, as well as to external training opportunities. Research students may also develop their personal and professional capabilities as an integral part of their studies, such as giving presentations, working in a team, and through other activities.

## 3. Principles

3.1. The University is committed to providing personal and professional development opportunities for research students to complement and build on the research and other skills gained through pursuing their research.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality>

<sup>10</sup> [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set\\_for\\_success.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set_for_success.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/publications/rcuk-training-grant-guide-pdf/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/>



- 3.2. Research students are encouraged to take advantage of the range of opportunities offered to them so that they develop identified strengths and competencies in a timely manner as they progress through their research project and prepare for the next steps of their career.
- 3.3. All research students have access to a range of training and developmental activities to become innovative and highly employable researchers. There are a range of opportunities, encompassing the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme and the more discipline-specific training provided through schools and faculties. In addition, research students have access to shared training via GW4, an alliance between the universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter, plus there may be other external training opportunities. It is recognised that other activities, as well as formal training, may also contribute to a research student's personal and professional development.

#### **4. Identifying and recording personal and professional development**

- 4.1. It is recognised that research students come from a wide range of backgrounds and have a variety of prior experience. Research students therefore require tailored training and development opportunities based on an analysis of their needs, as set out in Section 7 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.
- 4.2. Supervisors and their students should discuss personal and professional development in their regular meetings. Students may require more guidance and support towards the start of their degree, with the expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. Students are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from other sources in tandem with the supervisory relationship.
- 4.3. Personal and professional development is an essential part of creating successful researchers. It is important to acknowledge and discuss the personal and professional development of a research student as part of their annual progress review (see Section 6.2 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*). Reflections on training completed and other relevant activities undertaken, as well as planning for the future, should form part of the conversation during the annual progress review, forming a holistic evaluation of research progress and of personal and professional development.
- 4.4. Research students may wish to keep a portfolio of their skills and experience in relation to their personal and professional development to assist them in reflecting on their progress and to build up a full picture over the course of their studies.

## **Policy on placements for research students**

### **Introduction**

1. This policy defines the University requirements for placements for research students. It sets the standards and framework for the development and management of those arrangements. All University of Bristol research students who undertake placements are covered by this policy.

### **Definition of placements**

2. Placements (which are sometimes referred to as internships) involve research students spending a defined period of time at another organisation to gain work-based practical experience or to undertake activities or research that contributes directly to their training. The host organisation will normally expect that the research student engages with the organisation's objectives during the placement, with a work plan agreed before the placement starts.
3. The policy applies to the following:
  - a. Where a research student remains subject to the University's regulations but where there is a transfer of direct day-to-day supervision/management to the host organisation; and
  - b. Where the duration is for two weeks or more.
4. Research students who are sponsored by an external funder (including those funded by UK Research Councils) are covered by this policy and may also be subject to specific terms and conditions from their funder in relation to placements. In cases where research students are based at the premises of their external funder for a period of time (for example where the funder is a professional or industrial organisation), a separate placement agreement is not required if this has been covered in the overall student agreement.
5. Illustrative examples of what types of activity require or do not require placement agreements are included at the end of the policy.
6. The policy does **not** apply to the following:
  - a. Joint/dual awards;
  - b. Joint supervisory arrangements;
  - c. Fieldwork or site visits;
  - d. Secondments; and
  - e. Purely extracurricular employment that research students have arranged for themselves, such as part-time, term-time or vacation work.
7. Research students who are registered at other institutions and who undertake a placement at the University are **not** covered by this policy.

8. Placements will vary depending on research student and supervisor choices, on the funder and on the circumstances. Placements may be an optional opportunity for research students, or a requirement of their programme of study, funded by an external funder. A suspension of study may be required, or a placement may be integral to the programme of study. Placements may be connected to students' research projects, or they may provide opportunities to gain new skills and experience away from the research. This policy sets out the general principles that relate to all types of placements for research students.

### **Principles**

9. The University recognises the value of placements in the professional development and in expanding career options for research students. Potential benefits include opportunities to learn new skills, to enhance employability prospects, to experience other workplaces, and to gain new insights for research projects. Research students are therefore encouraged to take up opportunities offered to them.
10. The University values the opportunities provided by a wide range of organisations that host its research students for placements and aims to have constructive relationships with them.
11. The University has a duty of care for its students, and a member of University staff must be assigned as a point of contact for research students when they are on placements. This would normally be the main supervisor or a nominee. The University-assigned contact has a responsibility to maintain contact with the research student and with the hosting organisation.
12. Organisations that host placements have a responsibility to ensure that research students receive appropriate support and have access to facilities and resources, and that there is a named local supervisor/manager to provide direct guidance for the research student.
13. Research students undertaking placements should be diligent and professional, and remain subject to the University's regulations. They should keep their University-assigned contact informed of their progress and of any problems that occur.
14. The decision on whether the research student needs to suspend may be determined by a range of factors, such as requirements of the funding body and the duration of the placement.

### **Developing placements**

15. There is a University process, based on the principles set out in this policy, to assist faculties and schools in developing and approving placements for research students.
16. Placement opportunities will originate from multiple sources. For example, there may be existing links between the University and potential hosting organisations, or research students and their supervisors may locate opportunities themselves.

17. All placements must have a written, legally binding, agreement in place prior to their start. The process to develop a placement agreement will cover a due diligence check on the proposed hosting organisation, a consideration of the support that will be available to the student during the placement, and any necessary visa requirements. The supervisor or nominee must notify the school's PGR Director (or equivalent) and, with guidance from the Secretary's Office, will work with the proposed hosting organisation to develop the basis for the agreement, which will normally include establishing a work plan for the research student during the placement.
18. The placement agreement will *inter alia* include:
  - a) The responsibilities of all relevant parties, including reference to any agreed work plans;
  - b) Confirmation that suitable insurance is in place, such as employers' liability cover;
  - c) Confirmation that health, safety and welfare requirements are covered;
  - d) A consideration of confidentiality and Intellectual Property; and
  - e) Provisions for the withdrawal or termination of the agreement if a student's wellbeing is compromised, if there are instances of serious misconduct, or for other reasons.
19. The placement agreement will be signed by the research student, by a representative of the hosting organisation and by the Graduate Education Director for the relevant faculty.

### **Annual review process**

20. A research student's placement should be considered in the annual progress review process as part of their reflections on, and plans for, their personal and professional development.

### **Illustrative examples of where a placement agreement is or is not required**

- **Example A: Student goes to a third party to conduct work for their PhD and a placement agreement is required**

Student A is undertaking a PhD on the impact of hypertension drugs on patients with Alzheimer's. The student will be based at a private laboratory for three months testing patient samples to gain expertise in testing techniques and to gather data. During their time at the laboratory, the student will engage with its work and will be managed by a member of its staff. The results of the testing will form part of the student's PhD project. A placement agreement will be required, which will include Intellectual Property considerations.
- **Example B: Student goes to a third party for work-based experience and a placement agreement is required**

Student B's PhD relates to carbon dating techniques and the student wishes to gain a wider knowledge of relevant sectors to enhance their career options. The student will spend one month at the Plant Museum to work on applications of carbon dating for cataloguing plant specimens. The work will not contribute to Student B's PhD

project but it will provide work-based practical experience. The student will engage fully with the objectives of, and will be managed by, the Plant Museum. There is no existing Student Agreement in place as the Plant Museum is not involved in the funding of the student's PhD, and a placement agreement must therefore be put in place. As the data or information arising from the placement will not relate to the student's PhD, this does not have to be owned by the student or the University.

- **Example C: Student goes to a facility of a funder/project sponsor and a placement agreement is not required**

Student C is undertaking a PhD in aeronautical engineering funded by Aerospace plc. As part of their studies, the student will be based at Aerospace plc's research establishment for six months to carry out work that will contribute to their PhD project. Day-to-day management of the student will be undertaken by a member of staff from Aerospace plc. A placement agreement is not required as the arrangements for Student C's placement will be addressed in the overall Studentship Agreement with Aerospace plc.

- **Example D: Student goes to another organisation to learn a new technique and a placement agreement is required**

Student D's supervisor recommends that the student spends a month as part of their PhD training at a research group in another university to learn a new experimental technique. There is no partnership in place and day-to-day supervision of the student transfers to the other university for the duration. A placement agreement will be required. As the focus of the placement is on learning a new technique rather than in producing results, a provision for the student/University to own the data is not required.

- **Example E: Student goes to another organisation to learn a new technique and a placement agreement is not required**

Student E wishes to learn how to use a particular technique as part of their PhD project. A research establishment is willing to host the student for a few days to demonstrate how the technique is used. The supervisory team at the University remains responsible for the student and a placement agreement is not required in this case.

## ANNEX 12

### **Policy for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave for research students**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy is designed to ensure that individuals with caring responsibilities for young children are treated fairly and consistently and are not treated less favourably than other students as a result of their parental responsibilities. Following the birth or placement of a child, eligible research students can take maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental Leave as appropriate.

#### **2. Definition of terms used**

2.1 Maternity leave – a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by research students registered at the University of Bristol following the birth of a child.

2.2 Adoption leave - a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by research students registered at the University of Bristol following the placement of a child with an adoptive parent.

2.3 Paternity leave – ordinary paternity leave refers to a period of up to ten days leave available to the partner of the person giving birth, the partner of the primary adopter or an intended parent (for those having a baby through a surrogacy agreement).

2.4 Shared parental leave - a mechanism through which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave

#### **3. Terms and Conditions**

##### **3.1 Suspension of study**

3.1.1 Any research student applying for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave should submit a request in writing to the Graduate Education Director for a suspension of study for the relevant period.

3.1.2 Requests for suspension of study should be made on the appropriate form which is available from your school Postgraduate Administrator and require supporting evidence which will either be a MAT1B form or evidence of placement of a child for adoption. (A MATB1 form is issued approximately 15 weeks before the expected week of birth and is normally provided by the midwife).

3.1.3 When the suspension is granted, the student's submission date will be amended to take these circumstances into account, and the student will be notified of the new submission date by the Faculty.

3.1.4 After the suspension is agreed and signed by the Graduate Education Director, the Faculty Office should send a copy of the relevant paperwork to the School and the Student Funding Office. The Faculty Office will update the student's record in SITS to reflect the change to the student's registration status. The Student Funding Office will make any appropriate changes to the student's stipend payments as advised by the Faculty Office.

### **3.2 Payments to students**

3.2.1 RCUK-funded students will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.2 Students who are funded by the University of Bristol PG Scholarship will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.3 Students who are funded by their faculty or school will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.4 Students who receive external funding either directly from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must consult with their funder to determine whether payments can be made during periods resulting from adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of leave, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

3.2.5 Students who are self-funded (and those entitled to tuition fee only awards), are entitled to the periods of leave detailed within this policy, but will not be eligible for any financial support from the University.

3.2.6 Payments made to University-funded students who are either part-time, or only part-funded by the University, will be subject to a pro-rata adjustment in line with the percentage of funding received.

### **3.3 Students with UKVI Tier 4 visas**

3.3.1 In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI Tier 4 visa, suspension as a result of parental leave may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the leave. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

3.3.2 All requests for parental leave must be made in good time to permit time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

3.3.3 In all cases, advice should be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team as early as possible (especially in the case of a pregnancy) to ensure compliance with the Tier 4 visa can be maintained.

### **3.4 Repayment of stipend payments**

3.4.1 Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis, by the Graduate Education Director.

3.4.2 Students should return to studies at the University in a full or part-time capacity (at least 50% FTE), for at least 3 months following maternity or adoption leave. Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis, by the

Graduate Education Director. There is no minimum period of return required after paternity leave.

## 4 Maternity leave

### 4.1 Stipend payments during maternity leave

4.1.1 The following table outlines a students' entitlement to stipend payments during maternity leave which is dependent upon the source of funding:

Funding source	Leave Entitlement	Stipend Payments
RCUK-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
University-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
School- or Faculty-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
Externally-funded	52 weeks	Payments at the discretion of the funder
Self-funded	52 weeks	No payment

4.1.2 The reduced rate refers to an equivalent payment that is available to staff who are entitled to statutory maternity pay. The lower level of statutory maternity pay is set by the government each year (see <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>).

4.1.3 Students who are unsure about the source of their funding should contact their School Postgraduate Administrator for clarification.

4.1.4 Students who are registered at less than 100% will receive their standard pro-rata stipend payments (for the initial 26-week period as above) followed by 13 weeks of the reduced payment, with the appropriate pro-rata percentage applied.

4.1.5 Students do not have to take the full 52 weeks maternity leave and can opt for a shorter period of maternity leave; however, in line with guidance for staff, students should take at least two weeks leave following the birth of the child.

## 5 Adoption leave

5.1 Students who are planning to or who have become parents as a result of adoption are entitled to the same support and advice as other students who become parents during their studies, and the processes, leave allowances and stipend payments outlined in the table above and elsewhere in this policy apply equally.

5.2 It is acknowledged that the time-frame for adoption arrangements may not allow as much time for planning in comparison with a pregnant student, and where this is the case, the student and the member of staff will follow the principles and processes as far as they are able.

5.3 Where two students are jointly adopting, only one member of the couple can be considered as the primary care-giver, who will be entitled to be considered for maternity related-absence. The other partner will be afforded the same entitlements as is outlined for partners entitled to paternity leave and shared parental leave.



5.4 All references to adoption and adoption leave include circumstances where individuals foster a child for adoption or are 'Parental Order' intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement.

## **6. Paternity leave**

6.1 All research students registered at the University of Bristol are eligible for paternity leave, if they are:

- the partner of the person who will give birth **or**
  - the partner of the primary adopter **or**
  - the intended parent (if you are having a baby through surrogacy arrangement)
- and**
- also have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing

6.2 In the case of couples who are adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement, adoption leave and pay are available to only one member of the couple. The other person can take paternity leave.

6.3 Paternity leave permits the individual to take up to 10 days leave on full stipend. Paternity leave must be taken in blocks of not less than one week. The funding end date should be extended to cover this period of absence.

## **7 Shared parental leave**

7.1 Shared parental leave is a mechanism through which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave, and is available to those who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (i) They must share responsibility for the child with one of the following: their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent, or their partner (if they live with them) and they must provide a written statement from the other parent to confirm this;
- (ii) They must be taking the leave to look after the child;
- (iii) The other parent must have qualified for maternity leave or pay; or statutory adoption leave or pay or maternity allowance, or have qualified for the payment of a stipend during maternity leave under a policy such as this, (e.g. if she is also a research student);
- (iv) The other parent must have returned to work and must no longer be in receipt of maternity/adoption pay or allowance, or must have returned to their research/studies if they are also a research student, (the start and end dates of their leave must be provided);
- (v) The other parent must have some entitlement to maternity or adoption leave remaining;
- (vi) The terms and conditions of their grant must not specifically exclude the taking of such leave.

7.2 The number of weeks that may be taken as shared parental leave will depend on how many of the other parent's 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave they have remaining, but

will in any event be capped at a maximum entitlement of 39 weeks. Shared parental leave must be taken as a continuous block and may not end later than the child's first birthday.

7.3 The payments and leave entitlement reflect those made to students undertaking maternity leave. Therefore, qualifying students in receipt of RCUK funding, or funded by the University of Bristol Scholarship, faculty- or school-funding, will continue to be paid at full stipend for shared parental leave taken in the 26 weeks following the birth of the child, or at the reduced rate in the 13 weeks after week 26.

7.4 The student should apply for a suspension of study as outlined above. All applications should be submitted with a statement from the parent, in receipt of the paid maternity or adoption leave, confirming that the applicant for shared parent leave is their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent. In addition, the student must also provide the contact details of the employer of the individual in receipt of paid maternity or adoption leave (to check when their entitlement to maternity or adoption leave/pay ends). A form can be obtained from the student's Faculty Office for this purpose.

7.5 Where the individual in receipt of maternity or adoption leave is also a research student, please provide details of the relevant HE Institution.

## ANNEX 13

### Medical absence policy for funded research students

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The policy relates to the payment of stipends during periods of absence due to illness and applies to full-time and part-time research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol and/or by a UK Research Council.

1.2 Research students who are also members of staff of the University of Bristol should follow the appropriate HR Services policy for staff.

#### 2. Student eligibility criteria for receiving stipend payments

2.1 Full-time and part-time research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol (including the UoB PG Scholarship and faculty- or school-funded students) and/or by a UK Research Council are entitled to up to 13 weeks paid medical absence at their standard stipend value from the first day of certified illness within any 12-month academic year period.

2.2 Research students who receive an externally funded stipend from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must follow the regulations of the funder. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of medical absence, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

2.3 Students in receipt of awards covering tuition fees only are not eligible to receive any payment during periods of sickness.

2.4 Funding to cover periods of medical absence will not be provided to students during unfunded periods of study.

2.5 Part-time or part-funded students should expect to receive any payments to which they are entitled on a pro-rata basis.

#### 3. Certification of medical absence

3.1 Research students who wish to continue to receive their stipend payment during a period of medical absence must provide the University with appropriate medical certification.

#### 4. Suspension or extension of study due to medical absence

4.1 Information on suspensions, extensions and changes to mode of attendance is held in Section 6.4 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*

4.2 In cases of illness of a long duration, the school or faculty, in liaison with Disability Services, may wish to consider whether the student's withdrawal from the programme and possible reapplication at a future date would be a more appropriate measure.

#### 5. Students with UKVI Tier 4 Visas

5.1 In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI Tier 4 visa, suspension of studies may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the suspension. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

5.2 All requests for suspension of studies must be made at the earliest opportunity to permit time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

5.3 In all cases, advice should be sought from the International Student Visa Advice and Compliance Team as early as possible to ensure compliance with the Tier 4 visa can be maintained.

## **6. Returning to study after periods of medical absence**

6.1 Students must keep their supervisor and appropriate school or faculty informed of any changes in their circumstances that may result in them returning to their studies earlier or later than originally stated. Students who have suspended their studies and want to return to their studies later than originally stated must apply for an extension to their suspension and provide a new medical certificate.

6.2 Occupational Health and/or the Disability Support Office should be consulted if additional support is required for students returning from long-term medical absence. The University's *Fitness to Study Policy* may also be consulted (available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>.)

## ANNEX 14

### Supporting research students: A guide for supervisors

#### Introduction

Supervising a research student can be one of the most rewarding experiences in your academic career, intellectually, professionally and personally. It can also be daunting, particularly if you are new to supervising or if you encounter challenges outside your domain of expertise.

The following is meant as a practical guide for supervisors and as a signpost to University resources and procedures that support research students. It deals mainly with non-academic matters, but also touches on some academic matters of a general nature. It is intended to complement the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, referred to in what follows as the Code of Practice. It is not meant as an alternative version thereof. Questions about formal regulations and procedures must always be referred to the Code of Practice, which takes primacy over this guidance.

There is one golden rule which summarises this guidance: If you're concerned about your student and are not sure what to do, ask for help.

Supervisors are not expected to sort everything out on their own. You will have colleagues in your school, faculty and in the University who will know how to help with issues you may not be familiar with, for example to do with accommodation, funding, physical and mental health, training, careers advice outside your discipline, etc.

As a supervisor, your primary responsibility is to provide academic mentoring to your student; this is the cornerstone of postgraduate research education. But another important responsibility is to serve as a point of contact between your student and the University. If your student is experiencing difficulties, then by alerting the relevant University staff at an early stage, you will help to ensure that they get the best and most timely help and support.

It is important to realise that all research students have, in addition to their main supervisor, at least one other point of academic contact, and may have other supervisors. The role of each member of the supervisory team may vary depending on the project and on the circumstances of the particular student. Clarifying your role and involvement at the start of the period of study is essential and this should be achieved by means of an open discussion between the supervisory team and the student.

If such difficulties should arise, you should approach the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) in your department or school, and, for non-academic matters, a member of staff with a pastoral/wellbeing role. Others who might be helpful are experienced colleagues, your Postgraduate Administrator, and your Head of School, Faculty Education Manager, and Graduate Education Director.

The guidance below is organised broadly around the student lifecycle.

### **At the start**

If you are supervising a student new to the University, keep an eye on how they are settling in. Arrange regular meetings. Ask, as appropriate, whether there are any problems with, for example, accommodation, funding arrangements, and balancing caring responsibilities and/or employment outside the University with their studies. Non-UK students may face particular challenges - adapting to a new country and culture, and using English if it is not their first language. If you have any concerns, seek advice from your Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) or from a member of staff with a pastoral/wellbeing role. Do also check that they are joining in the academic life of their research community in the expected way. Are they attending the right lectures, group meetings, seminars?

At the start of a research degree and at appropriate times thereafter, you should discuss your student's expectations, as well as yours: what they hope to get from their research degree, what they expect of you as supervisor, and what you expect of them.

### **Supervisory meetings**

*"How frequently should I meet with my student? Should notes be kept? Who is responsible for keeping notes?"*

There is no fixed rule about the frequency of supervisory meetings - this will depend on many factors: the nature of the discipline, the stage of the project, individual preferences, etc. The Code of Practice (Section 5) specifies that formal meetings should normally take place at least monthly. It is good practice for notes to be kept of all meetings, and this is required for formal meetings. It is the student's responsibility to take the notes, but supervisors should ensure that this is happening. Some students may wish to use the Notes and Narrative facility in the Skills Training and Review (STaR) tool.

*"I'm going to be away for a time. What do I need to do about my students?"*

If you will be out of contact for an extended period, you should let your Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) know, so that temporary supervision can be put in place - this is as required by the Code of Practice (Section 5). If you will be away but in remote contact with your student, say by email or video conferencing, you should still let your Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) know. It is important that your student knows whom to approach in the University if any problems should arise during your absence; this could be a second supervisor, for example. If you have concerns about your student's academic progress or wellbeing while you're away, you should tell your Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) immediately.

## **Annual progress monitoring**

As stated in the Code of Practice (Section 6), all research students are required to have their progress reviewed annually. As a supervisor, you should ensure you are able to advise your students on this process and ensure they are actively engaging with it in a timely manner. You will be expected to contribute to the process by commenting on your student's progress and highlighting any concerns or issues you have. In your comments, please make note of any issues that are outside the control of the student that may have a subsequent impact on the timely submission of the final dissertation.

## **Financial matters**

As stated in the Code of Practice (Section 4), it is understood that research students may undertake paid work whilst doing their degree; for many students, this is necessary to support their studies. Students are also expected to work on their research at a rate commensurate with their registration status (i.e., full-time, half-time, etc.). As supervisor, you should discuss work commitments with your student. Your faculty or school may have guidance about how much work students should take on, as well as restrictions on the amount of paid University employment.

Research students are eligible to apply for a travel grant from the Alumni Association (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/students/apply-for-funding/travel-grants/>).

Information about tuition fees and stipends as well as funding advice can be found on the Student Funding Office pages (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/fees-funding/>).

## **Personal and professional development**

Personal and professional development for research students encompasses a range of training, from the discipline focused to the broadly aimed.

As a supervisor, you, alongside the postgraduate team in your school, have primary responsibility for your student's academic training. Given your disciplinary expertise, this should be relatively straightforward to undertake. Do remember to consider not only training geared specifically to their research project but their more general development as researchers. This can be achieved through participating in seminars, workshops and conferences; presenting their work, both within the University and externally; and engaging with current literature and active scholars in their field. The annual progress review provides an opportunity for colleagues to suggest academic training that might benefit your student.

Training outside a student's academic discipline can also be very valuable. The University offers a wide spectrum of courses covering, for example: project management, IT skills, applied foreign languages, innovation and enterprise, teaching, public engagement, and mindfulness and well-being.

These courses are coordinated by the Bristol Doctoral College (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/>), and are underpinned by the *Personal*

and *Professional Development Policy for Research Students* (in Annex 10). This policy is in turn informed by the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>), which is a national reference point in the planning, promotion and support of personal and professional development for researchers in higher education.

You are not expected to be an authority on the entirety of the University's personal and professional development offering. But through inviting your student to reflect on their own development, providing advice as you can, and encouraging them to take advantage of training opportunities, you will be giving invaluable support to the more general aspects of their postgraduate education.

Discipline-specific and broadly-aimed training are complementary. Try to foster both.

### **Difficulties**

Most supervisors know it is not uncommon for a research student to go through a difficult period in their studies, when they may lose confidence and/or motivation. Supervisors will have their own strategies for providing encouragement and support during such a period. Colleagues can often provide helpful advice.

If difficulties persist over an extended period, say more than a few months, it is a good idea to inform your Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) and to consider with them options for going forward.

In case of academic difficulties, do ask the student if they have suggestions for different ways of working, either on their own, with you, or perhaps with other researchers with whom they are engaged. If the student would benefit from additional structure and monitoring, the enhanced academic support process, described in the Code of Practice (Section 6), might be appropriate. In the most serious cases, it might be appropriate to discuss with your student the option of transferring to another degree (for example, from a PhD to a Masters by Research), or withdrawing from the programme.

For non-academic problems, including personal matters and health problems, a suspension of studies might be indicated. Another option is for the student to change their mode of attendance, for example from full-time to half-time (but be aware that normally, students can change their mode of attendance only twice).

### **Maintaining confidentiality**

Maintaining appropriate confidentiality is vital to the dignity of the student and securing trust in the student-supervisor relationship. Personal information confided in you by your student should not normally be shared without their permission, although there may be rare circumstances where this may be necessary. You should consult and adhere to the principles in the University's Student Services *Confidentiality Policy*



(<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/studentsservices/policy/confidentialitypolicy.html>) in those cases.

It is important to be aware of whether the student is telling you information suggestive of a disability. In such cases, you should encourage the student to disclose their situation, emphasising the level of confidentiality followed by Student Services and the potential additional support they may receive.

### **Unexpected absences and crises**

If your student is unexpectedly absent, do try to establish that they are well and to ascertain the reason for their absence. If they do not respond to attempts to contact them, you should inform, without delay, your postgraduate team (including the Director of Postgraduate Studies, or equivalent, and the postgraduate administrator, as well as your faculty postgraduate office). Likewise, if your student is acting erratically or if you have concerns about their wellbeing, you should contact your postgraduate team.

The Vulnerable Students Support Service (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/studentsservices/vulnerablestudents/>) can help in dealing with students in crisis. Your postgraduate team will know how to engage with them so that intervention, if needed, can be arranged as quickly as possible.

Crises precipitated by physical or mental health problems may require a suspension of studies. In cases where a student is unwilling to suspend despite concerns about their health or wellbeing, the *Fitness to Study Policy* and Procedure may be appropriate (available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>).

### **Career Advice**

As supervisor, you will be well placed to advise your student on pursuing an academic career, including how to present their work, networking, finding postdoctoral positions and pursuing longer-term career objectives.

It is a fact, though, that most research students do not become academics, but instead pursue careers in other arenas such as education, business, industry and government.

Many students will benefit from advice about careers in sectors other than academia. Depending on your background and experience, you may be well placed to provide such advice, or not. You can help your student by enabling them to access career advice outside your discipline. This could be through colleagues, the Careers Service (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/careers/>), recruitment events and internships. Bear in mind that some students might be reluctant to share an interest in a career outside of academia, for fear that their supervisor might be disappointed, or that they might lose standing as a scholar. In discussions about careers, try to give your best advice without overreaching your area of expertise, and try to be open minded about choices that may lie outside it.

## **Plagiarism training**

Your school or faculty may provide training to research students on how to avoid plagiarism, and students will have opportunities to put drafts of their written work through plagiarism detection software (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/tel/support/tools/turnitin/>) before submitting their dissertation. As a supervisor, you should ensure that your students feel confident about what constitutes poor academic practice and plagiarism, and that they are making trial submissions to Turnitin. Don't just look at the percentage of matched material in the Turnitin report. A dissertation is a long document, and a single page of contiguous text taken from another source without attribution might well be serious plagiarism, even though it constitutes just a small percentage of the whole.

## **Submission deadlines and extensions**

Submission deadlines are strict. Make sure you know when your student's submission deadline is (there is variation across programmes), and regularly assess whether they are on track. In most cases, students should plan to submit at least six months before their submission deadline. Also, students in receipt of a stipend should usually aim to submit before their stipend finishes. If a student has funding through to their submission deadline, they should aim to have their dissertation ready to submit well in advance.

As explained in the Code of Practice (Section 6), extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but an application must be made well in advance of the deadline. You should review your student's progress no later than four months before the deadline, if they haven't already submitted, and a request for an extension should be submitted shortly thereafter, if it is warranted.

It is the student who applies for an extension, not the supervisor. As supervisor, you will be asked for a statement of support and to sign off on a timetable for completion.

Not having enough time to do everything in a dissertation that one had hoped is not a good reason for an extension. Students should submit by the deadline unless circumstances outside their control prevent it.

## **The examination**

As specified by the Code of Practice (Section 5), supervisors are expected to provide feedback on their students' written work, including their dissertation.

The detail into which supervisors review their students' dissertations varies across and within disciplines. Ultimately, the student is responsible for the content of their dissertation. A supervisor is expected to have assessed whether the work presented is of the appropriate standard, and to convey any concerns on this score to the student before the oral examination.

As specified in the Code of Practice (Section 9), prior to the examination, supervisors should not discuss the examination with the examiners, nor send them copies of the dissertation, either printed or electronic.

Remember that the examiners' recommendations are just that; the outcome of an examination is decided by the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB), which may not meet for several weeks or more after the oral examination. Once the RDEB has made its decision, you can request a copy of the Examiners' Reports. It is good practice to review the reports; supervisors say this can be extremely useful.

If your student is required to make corrections to their dissertation, you are expected to be available to provide advice and support. Students are permitted to contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if there is no internal examiner) just once following the oral examination, in order to seek clarifications about the requested changes. After this contact has occurred, as supervisor you may seek further informal guidance and clarification from the examiners on behalf of your student.